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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH
IN THE FIRST CENTURY.

THE
Government of the Church
in the First Century

AN ESSAY ON THE BEGINNINGS OF THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

n/lc

*Presented to the Theological Faculty
of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth
as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor*

BY
REV. WILLIAM MORAN

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PREFACE.

THE Catholic Church bases her authority to teach and govern on the apostolic succession of her hierarchy. Christ founded a Church, and gave the apostles whom he placed over it certain ecclesiastical powers to be transmitted by them to their successors to the end of time. The ecclesiastical superiors of to-day claim to teach and rule, not by election or delegation of the faithful, but by a kind of spiritual descent instituted by Christ. In this age of political Liberalism and popular sovereignty, it is not surprising to find the Church assailed for her oligarchical constitution. Advanced Protestants would have the people supreme in the Church as in the State ; while the modern rationalists would have us believe that our hierarchical jurisdiction is the effect of evolution and the growth of centuries, and that it was unknown and unheard of in the early Church. It is with a view to answering these difficulties that I propose to inquire into the government of the primitive Church, and to show that its constitution was, in principle, the same in the first century as it is in the twentieth.

In the course of this essay the reader will notice some differences of detail between the ecclesiastical organization of our own day and that of apostolic times. That is only what we might expect ; development in the details of organization was inevitable. The extent of this development is a subject of considerable domestic controversy in Catholic schools. Many theologians think that our

present hierarchical system has come down with scarcely any alteration from the very beginning. There are not wanting Catholic scholars, however, who think that the monarchical episcopate was not universally known in the first Christian generation ; and that in the less important churches the episcopal authority was more frequently vested, not in an individual, but in a college of equal bishops. I find this view very ably defended by Dr. Michiels in a thesis presented to the Theological Faculty of Louvain in A.D. 1900. This raises a question, which has been receiving renewed attention in recent times—Does the monarchical episcopate exist *jure divino* ? Or is it only the episcopate that is essential to the divine constitution of the Church ; while the monarchical, as distinct from the collegiate, episcopate is an institution of Canon law ?

To do justice to a subject of such interest and importance as the government of the primitive Church, I feel that much more time and space would be required than I have been able to devote to it. This is particularly true of the introductory chapter, which is necessarily meagre. To deal adequately with the teaching of Christ, a separate volume would be required. Notwithstanding this difficulty, I thought it better to give a short review, rather than none at all, of Christ's teaching ; for this seemed to be the most appropriate introduction to the subject proper of the essay.

Though the *onus probandi* rests on those who assail the facts and conclusions received for so many centuries, I have not consciously urged the argument from prescription, in criticising the opinions of modern Liberal scholars. I have preferred to rely on the sources alone, because the evidence from these sources seems to be

sufficiently conclusive. An essay which partakes more or less of the nature of an apology for a certain principle will be open, of course, to the usual suspicions of prejudice and preconceived ideas, from which the literature of Liberal Protestantism claims to be exempt. The days are fast disappearing, however, when the claims of free thought in this respect could go unchallenged. Few serious students will now deny that the desire to upset received notions and establish new theories has been as fruitful of mental bias, as the desire of orthodox writers to maintain older opinions. I have endeavoured to avoid these various faults, by giving an impartial review of the evidence in criticising the opinions of Catholics and non-Catholics alike. How far I have succeeded the reader must judge. "Mental presuppositions, like sins," as Dr. Lindsay says, "are more readily recognized in our neighbours than in ourselves."

W. M.

MAYNOOTH COLLEGE,

APRIL, 1913.

The Government of the Church in the First Century.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

THE CHURCH IN THE GOSPEL.

“Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” Such was the burden of the Baptist’s preaching. He was come to herald the long expected Messiah, already in the midst of His people, but as yet hidden and unknown. John’s fiery message aroused the Jews; and many thought they had found the Christ. But John proclaimed: “I am not the Christ; I baptize with water. In the midst of you stands One, who is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am unworthy to loose; He will baptize you with fire and the Holy Spirit.”¹ In due time Jesus comes to be baptized. John would have prevented Him, saying: “I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?” Jesus replied: “Suffer it; for we must fulfil all justice.” Then both went down into the water, the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven exclaimed: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And so our Lord opened His public life, receiving the testimony of John from earth, and that of the eternal Father from heaven.

Wishing to avoid a collision with the civil power,² Jesus retires to Galilee. On His way through Samaria, He meets a woman at the well of Jacob. In reply to a query as to the relative merits of the temple worship of Jerusalem and of Gerizim, Jesus, while maintaining the rights of the Jewish temple, takes occasion to point out that the time is at hand, when this local exclusiveness will be removed, and when

¹ John i. 27; Luk. ili. 16.

² Matt. iv. 12.

God will be worshipped throughout the world. Feeling that she stands in the presence of a great prophet, perhaps the Messiah himself, the woman ventures half-enquiringly : "When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things." Jesus replies : "I who speak to thee am He." This was a plain statement of His Messianic claims. Such a confession could only be made, at least in the beginning of His public life, in the city, where the recognition of His claims involved no danger of a popular rising against the Roman government, and where there were no Pharisees to misrepresent His every word and movement.

Having retired into Galilee, "Jesus began to preach and to say : the time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent and believe the gospel."¹ He also called together a little group of disciples, and with these went through Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of infirmity among the people. "And His fame went through all Syria, and they brought to Him those afflicted with all kinds of disease, and those possessed by devils and those paralysed, and He healed them. And great crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis, from Jerusalem and Judea and the country beyond the Jordan."² These multitudes Jesus gathered round Him on a mountain, and began to expound to them His doctrine : "And opening His mouth He taught them saying : Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."³ Those are the first words of the sermon on the mount.

When Jesus speaks of "the kingdom," He is using a phrase that is in everyone's mouth. The announcement suffices to arouse the Jews ; for it stirs up in the national mind a world of hopes and expectations. In the dark days of persecution, the Jews in the captivity and in the dispersion had been sustained and encouraged by the prospect of glory and prosperity, held out to them by the prophets : "And judgment shall sit . . . that the kingdom, under the whole heaven, may be given to the people of the saints of the Most High ; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom ; and all kings

¹ Mark i. 15 ; Matt. iv. 17.

² Matt. iv. 23-25.

³ *ib.* v. 2.

shall serve Him and obey Him.”¹ The Jews failed, indeed, to realise the spiritual nature of these promises. For them, the kingdom was a great political empire, in which Israel would dominate the whole world. We have but to read the apocryphal *Psalms of Solomon*, to see how much the Jewish mind was filled with these expectations, in the time of Christ. Jesus could not abruptly correct these false notions; the shock would have been too violent, and would have provoked at once a breach with the multitudes. His first care was, therefore, not to explain the nature of His kingdom, but rather to lead men quietly towards it; to establish the authority of His mission, and thus place Himself in a position to transform the popular idea.

All human hopes and works must be made subservient to our last end: “What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, if he suffer the loss of his own soul?” This is the kingdom which our Lord teaches men to look forward to above all things: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land; blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; . . . blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God; . . . blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when they shall revile and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.”² These blessed rewards can only be obtained in heaven, for in this world man’s religious life is never free from persecution, risks and temptations. The scandals of the world, even of the kingdom,³ the false prophets,⁴ the leaven of the Pharisees,⁵ the attractions of life, and the power of the devil maintain a continuous warfare against the children of the kingdom. But there is a life hereafter, in which the blessed will enjoy all good things in peace. The Sadducees once objected to Christ that the levirate law was incompatible with the doctrine of a resurrection. “And Jesus answering said to them: you err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in

¹ Dan. vii. 26-27.² Matt. v.³ *ib.* xiii. 41.⁴ *ib.* vii. 15.⁵ *ib.* xvi. 12.

the resurrection, they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as angels of God in heaven." This doctrine opens up a new world, to which men may look forward for a final reward. This world beyond the grave is the kingdom in its most important sense: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."¹ There the just will shine like the sun,² the pure of heart will see God,³ and those who have suffered for justice will obtain a royal reward.⁴ In this kingdom, the nations will sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while the natural heirs will be cast out.⁵ Hence, when the penitent thief prays: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," our Lord replies: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."⁶ The kingdom is paradise, the final reward. Again, when Christ says: "It is better for thee with one eye to enter the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire," He means this final reward also; for He opposes to it a hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."⁷

When the apostles ask Christ how they are to pray, He teaches them to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."⁸ It is a prayer for a kingdom on earth; but that kingdom consists in hallowing the name of the Father, and doing His will on earth, as it done in heaven. Hence, this phase of the kingdom is opposed to the reign of sin and of the devil: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth; art Thou come to destroy us?" When the Pharisees said that Jesus cast out devils by Beelzebub, our Lord replied: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be laid desolate. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom last? But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then the kingdom of God is come upon you."⁹ It is not so much a kingdom as a

¹ Matt. xxv. 34.

² *ib.* v. 8.

³ *ib.* viii. 12.

⁷ Mark. ix. 46, 47.

² *ib.* xiii., 43.

⁴ *ib.* v. 10.

⁶ Luk. xxiii. 42.

⁸ Luk. xi; Matt. vi. 10.

⁹ Matt. xii. 25-28.

sovereignty (*βασιλεία* has both meanings), a reign of God in men's hearts. Being a spiritual entity, it is also contrasted with the goods of the world: "Be not solicitous, therefore, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you."¹

This sovereignty is but the soul of an earthly phase of the kingdom, in the proper sense of the word. This kingdom is the collectivity of all those, who believe in Christ and His teaching. When Pilate asks: "Art Thou, then, a king?" our Lord replies: "For this was I born, and for this have I come into the world, that I may give testimony to the truth." His kingdom is primarily a kingdom of truth. It is not, however, a puritanical reformation of Judaism, a clearing away of the "traditions of men"; neither is it a prophetic school returning, like so many of the older prophets, to a forgotten justice. It is a new entity, based on a new revelation: "I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to me by the Father, and no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and to whom the Son will reveal (Him). And turning to His disciples, He said: Blessed are the eyes, that see the things, which you see."² This new revelation came, only after John the Baptist, to complete the law and the prophets, which held sway up till his time.³ It is a new glad tidings,⁴ a mysterious message,⁵ a hidden treasure,⁶ a pearl of great price.⁷ It is a message, which the prophets themselves longed to receive, and which the disciples are accounted blessed to hear.⁸ This revelation Jesus calls the word of the kingdom.⁹

Our Lord once said to the Pharisees: "You are those, who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is high to men is an abomination to

¹ Matt. vi. 31-33.

⁴ Mark i. 15.

⁷ *ib.* 45.

² Luk. x. 21-23.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 11.

⁸ *ib.* 16-17.

³ *ib.* xvi. 16.

⁶ *ib.* 44.

⁹ *ib.* 19.

God. The law and the prophets (were) till John ; from that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and everyone uses violence towards it.”¹ The kingdom here spoken of cannot be the final kingdom in heaven, nor the sovereignty of God in men’s hearts ; for John the Baptist—more than prophet, than whom one greater has not been born of woman—cannot be excluded from either of these phases of the kingdom. It has begun since John’s time, yet the least of its citizens is greater than he. Here we have clearly a third phase of the kingdom, one, moreover, which implies an external institution of some kind ; for a kingdom that has a definite limit in time, and which makes its humblest citizen superior to the great ascetic prophet, cannot be a mere invisible entity, based on a religious union of the soul with God. Again, Christ says : “ The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent and believe the gospel.” Now, the reign of God in men’s hearts was never out of season ; we cannot imagine God determining a time, through the mouth of His prophet, for such a sovereignty. We must, therefore, attach some other meaning to the “ kingdom ” in the passage before us. It does not mean the final rest in heaven ; for there must first come a kingdom of heaven upon earth, a kingdom, however, which Christ tells the Pharisees comes not with observation, but is already in their midst.² The “ accomplished time ” is that spoken of by the prophets, after which, in the words of the angel, “ The Lord shall give Him the throne of David His Father.” The kingdom is that of the Son of David, a true kingdom on earth, composed of all those who “ repent and believe the gospel.” This collectivity is represented as a seed-plot, where the good seed—the word of the kingdom—is sown, and where it germinates, and grows to a full harvest, to be at last gathered into the kingdom of the Father in heaven. “ Behold, the sower went out to sow his seed . . . hear you, therefore, the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart ; this is he that received the seed by the

¹ Luk. xvi. 15-16.

² Luk. xvii. 20.

way-side. And he that received the seed upon stony ground is he that hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself; and when persecution and tribulation arise, because of the word, he is presently scandalised. And he that received the seed among thorns is he that hears the word, and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke up the word, and he becomes fruitless."¹ The seed is the word of the kingdom, the preaching of Christ, the glad tidings He spoke of, when he said: "Repent and believe the gospel."²

Not all, however, believe the gospel. Sometimes the soil—the heart of man—is too hard, and the devil snatches away the seed before it sinks into that soil. Others receive it with joy, but when they are overtaken by persecution for the word, they "are presently scandalised," and allow the word to die. And others still believe firmly, but never bring forth the fruit of a good life, because they are too much given to worldly attachments. The word does not die in their hearts, but, like the seed, it becomes fruitless—it never ripens into a full ear. Others, still, hear and believe and nourish the word, *i.e.*, suit their actions to their belief; and these bring forth abundant fruit. But whether they bring forth fruit or remain barren, men continue to belong to the kingdom, while the seed continues to live in their hearts. This appears more plainly from another parable, which immediately follows the one we have been considering. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man, that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. . . . The sower is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seeds are the children of the kingdom; the bad are the children of the wicked one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle is gathered up and burned, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals and those that

¹ Matt. xiii. 3, 18-23.

² Mark i. 15.

work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In the ordinary course of events, the good seed would have sprung up worthy children of the kingdom. But the devil, the enemy of Christ, oversows bad seed, something like the briars and thorns of the former parable ; so that the same soil has now both good and bad seed. This work of the enemy produces its effects in due time—it begets in the kingdom itself scandal-givers and workers of iniquity, who cannot be safely removed till the harvest time. The kingdom will embrace in this life worthy and unworthy members, children of Christ, and children of the devil. Here we get an insight into the meaning of another parable, recorded by St. Matthew in the same chapter.¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, and gathering together all kinds of fish. Which, when it was filled, they drew out ; and sitting by the shore they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out, and separate the wicked from among the just." The kingdom is not a collectivity of the whole human race, for the net does not catch all the fish in the sea ; but among those which it does catch, are bad as well as good, and those can only be separated when the earthly stage of the kingdom shall have run its course.

The citizens of the kingdom are those, who understand the teaching of Christ, those who have responded to the call of faith. There are some within, to whom the mysteries of the kingdom have been revealed, and who, therefore, understand ; there are others without, who have been taught in parables, but have failed to understand.² The latter are like the soil by the wayside ; the seed is sown, but before the hearer understands, the devil comes and snatches the seed out of his heart. The same idea runs through the parable of the marriage-feast. The guests were invited, but would not come. Then the king sent his servants into the highways, to call as many as they should find : "And His servants gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the

¹ Matt. xiii. 47-50.

² Mark iv. 11.

marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests, and He saw there a man, who had not on a wedding garment. . . . Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into exterior darkness."¹ The Jews first received the call to faith, but failed to understand and accept it. Then the king sends forth his servants to the ways of the Gentiles, and the feast is filled with guests, "both bad and good." As the seed-plot contains scandals and workers of iniquity, and the net bad fish as well as good, so the marriage-feast includes "both bad and good" guests. To be present at that feast, one has only to respond to the call or invitation of the king. A man does not cease to be a citizen of the kingdom, therefore, because he fails to realise the new life revealed. But he is a guest without the nuptial garment; and when the great day of separation comes, he shall be "cast out into exterior darkness."

The call to the kingdom is a great gift of God; it is a new revelation, a hidden treasure, a pearl of great price. To some it is given plainly, to others only in parables; for it is God's free gift.² Nevertheless many refuse to accept it. There are some who are unworthy, dogs and swine to whom pearls are not given;³ there are others who receive the call, but repel it, houses and cities, against which the disciples shall shake off the dust from their feet. There are some, whom Christ Himself solicits with the most anxious care, but who still reject the proffered gift.⁴ This is the great sin of the Jews—an obstinate refusal to accept the word of the kingdom. This is the complaint of Jesus in the parable of the marriage-feast.⁵ The Scribes and Pharisees are particularly guilty. Not only have they failed to realise in their lives the new revelation, but they have refused to enter the kingdom at all: "Amen, I say to you that the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom before you. For, John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and harlots believed him; but, you, seeing it, did not afterwards repent, that you might believe him."⁶

¹ Matt. xxii.² cf. parable of labourers, Matt. xx.³ Matt. vii.⁴ Luk. xiii. 34.⁵ Matt. xxi., xxii.⁶ *ib.* xxi, 31, 32.

And again : " Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge ; you yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering you have hindered." ¹ Here, again, we see that citizenship comes of belief in Christ's teaching. The Scribes and Pharisees have the key of knowledge—they sit on the chair of Moses—and they have consequently perverted those who were disposed to enter. Again, they are compared to husbandmen, to whom the Father has hired out his vineyard.² They have mismanaged his vineyard, maltreated his servants, and murdered the heir to the inheritance. Jesus condemns them out of their own mouth : " They said to Him : He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render him the fruits in due season. . . . Therefore, I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."

A gift of such importance requires in the recipient certain qualifications. The missions of John the Baptist, of our Lord Himself, and of the disciples, open with the same words : " Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Penance or conversion, therefore, is the first condition. The seed will thrive only on good soil, *i.e.*, in a soul free from the thorns of worldly attachments. Again, man must bow his intellect to the word of God, and receive the teaching of Christ with the simple faith and trust of a little child : " Amen, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom as a little child shall not enter it." ³ The kingdom, however, is not merely this state of righteousness, but rather an end to be gained by the righteous, a pearl to be bought with great sacrifices. The man, who loves father or mother more than Christ, is not worthy of Him. Riches, especially, are a great obstacle to the attainment of the kingdom : " It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." ⁴ These words were pronounced by Jesus on the occasion of a visit from a rich young man. This young man had led a most exemplary life ; he had fulfilled all the commandments of the law, was

¹ Luk. xi. 52.

² Matt. xxi. 33.

³ Mark x. 15.

⁴ *ib.* 25.

loved by Jesus, and was given the call to discipleship : " One thing is wanting to thee ; go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ; and come and follow Me. But he, being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." If the kingdom consisted merely in a good life, this young man already possessed it. But something was still wanting to make him a citizen ; it was the revelation and discipleship of Jesus.

Penance and self-denial are conditions for entering the kingdom. Yet, justification seems to be acquired, only when one has entered : " To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom ; but to those that are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." ¹ One cannot enter in sin into the final stage of the kingdom, the Church triumphant. This stage our Lord chiefly has in view, when He says : " Not everyone who says to Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter." ² But this heavenly kingdom has a province on earth, a place of preparation and probation, where men are justified. Men cannot enter even this, without a certain degree of self-denial ; for otherwise, how will they humble themselves as little children before the teaching of Christ ? They must also " repent " and " do penance," *i.e.*, possess such dispositions, as will lead to their justification, when they enter the kingdom. This condition is required, because even in this life, the children of the kingdom are expected to be perfect ; they are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the leaven of the flour. They are to be an example to all men, ³ by walking the straight way that leads to life, ⁵ perfect like their heavenly Father. ⁶ But this is only the vocation, the ideal standard. If Christ has called the good in plainer language, He has called the Scribes

¹ Mark iv. 11, 12.

² Matt. vii. 21.

³ *ib.* v. 16.

⁵ Matt. vii. 14.

⁶ *ib.* v. 45, 48.

and Pharisees—those whited sepulchres—in parables. If men can obtain justification in the kingdom, there are many who never avail of the means. Among the twelve whom Jesus specially called, and to whom He revealed His mysteries, one remained a sinner : “ Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ? ”¹ We have Christ’s own word that the kingdom will contain worthy and unworthy citizens, scandal-givers as well as shining lights.² The fact, that the delinquent is to be accounted the least in the kingdom, proves that delinquencies are possible.³ It would be a mistake, therefore, to make an equation between the number of citizens of the kingdom, and the number of those who are just before God. The sinner, however, must not be left uncared for. If a sheep wanders from the flock, the good shepherd goes to search for it ; if a brother offends against another, he ought to be admonished in secret. Only when every other admonition fails, is excommunication to be resorted to.⁴ Even this remedy is restricted to a certain set of circumstances ; for the most part, the wheat and cockle must grow together, “ lest, perhaps, while rooting up the cockle, you root up the wheat also with it.” Jesus is the king, the master and model in this kingdom. He is likewise the shepherd among His flock. St. Luke, it is true, mentions the king and the flock in the same sentence : “ Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased the Father to give you the kingdom.”⁵ But it does not follow that the flock is really different from the kingdom. The passage is an exact counterpart of the discourses, in which our Lord predicts that the kingdom will be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. The Jews, as a race, will cease to be God’s people, the labourers in His vineyard. Their kingdom will no longer be God’s kingdom, the true theocracy. The kingdom has been transferred to Christ’s flock ; for them He becomes king in the special sense, in which He had before been king of Israel. The passage might well be paraphrased : “ It has pleased the Father to make you the kingdom.” It is

¹ John vi. 71.² Matt. xiii. 41.³ *ib.* v. 19⁴ *ib.* xviii. 15, 12.⁵ Luk. xii. 32.

because the disciples are the flock, that they are also the kingdom ; for Christ represents Himself both as shepherd and as king ; the two titles are but different names for the same reality.

The ties, which bind the shepherd to his flock, will soon receive a violent shock : “ You will all be scandalised in My regard this night, for it is written : I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed.”¹ But Jesus would not have His flock shepherdless, when He Himself should go ; He provides a rallying centre for them among His chosen twelve. To the apostles at the last supper He says : “ As the Father hath disposed to Me, so I dispose to you a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”² Then He goes on to show that Peter will be the chief shepherd : “ Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have *you* (plural), to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not ; and thou, once converted, confirm thy brethren.” Peter is to have brethren in his work, other “ fishers of men ” ;³ but on Him alone devolves the primacy, the duty of confirming all. The apostles are taught to rule with moderation ; for, immediately before He bequeathes His kingdom, Christ warns them to avoid the custom of the Gentiles : “ The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, . . . be you not so ; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the younger ; and he that is leader, as he that serves. The master is greater than the servant ; yet, I am in the midst of you as the servant.” If they are to succeed to the authority of Jesus, they ought to imitate Him in the use of it. He is master and lord,⁴ yet He has given them a perfect example of meekness and humility. Jesus implies there is to be one greater among them, one that is to be “ the leader,” but He deprecates a despotic use of the powers He is to confer.

The disposition of His power, coming as it does immediately after the announcement of Christ’s betrayal and death, can leave no doubt that the apostles, especially Peter, were to

¹ Mark xiv. 27.

² Luk. xxii. 29.

³ Mark i. 17.

⁴ John xiii. 13.

succeed, as representatives of Christ, to the authority of the kingdom. Hence, when our Lord announces that His hour is come, the apostles, mindful of promises already made,¹ and feeling that the time for their fulfilment is at hand, enter on a discussion, as to who shall be greatest in the kingdom, when the Master goes. The apostles were only men, subject like other men to the passion of ambition. Notwithstanding the awful crisis that was at hand, and the dreadful words that Christ had just uttered,² the desire of power was still uppermost in their minds. Peter had been promised the primacy long before,³ but the Master had shown a special love for John; John and his brother had been admitted with Peter into our Lord's special confidence;⁴ and they were not slow to avail of these facts, to urge a change in the plans of Jesus. They had already shown themselves Peter's chief rivals;⁵ and now it seemed the appointment was at hand. But the plans of Jesus were unchangeable; Peter is told to confirm his brethren; in a few days we shall see him receive the commission: "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep."

We have just observed that the apostles at the last supper were probably recalling the promises recorded by St. Matthew.⁶ On the road to Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: some John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias or one of the prophets. But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him: blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall

¹ Matt. xviii. 18.² Luk. xxii. 22.³ Matt. xvi. 18, 19.⁴ Matt. xvii. 1.; Mark. xiii. 3.⁵ Mark. x. 26.⁶ Matt. xvi. and xviii.

be loosed also in heaven." Simon now recognises why his name has been changed to Peter (rock), for he is the rock on which Christ shall build His Church. That title, together with the predicate, "son of Jona," shows that Peter alone is addressed. To him the promises are made; he is the rock foundation; the church built on him will be indefectible; he will be the chief steward, having the keys; his binding and loosing will be ratified in heaven. Peter will be the primate in the new kingdom. Two metaphors are employed to illustrate his primacy. He is the rock on which the house is built; he is the master of the house; for, to him alone the keys are entrusted.

A little later all the apostles receive together a promise to bind and loose with divine authority. They thus become partakers in one of the promises made to Peter. They will not, however, become the foundation; they will not receive the keys of the kingdom. We have already referred to the fulfilment of these promises in Peter's regard; but Jesus did not forget the other apostles. On the first Easter Sunday, while the doors were closed, Jesus stood in the midst of the disciples, in the supper-room of Jerusalem, and said: "Peace be to you." And when He had shown them the wounds in His hands and side, and convinced them of His corporal presence, He said to them again: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them: receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."¹ A few days later, He appeared to them on a mountain in Galilee, and gave them another great commission: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."² By these words, Jesus shows that He has before His eyes the whole future of the Church;

¹ John xx. 21, 22.

² Matt. xxviii. 19.

so that these powers are meant for the apostles, not only in their own persons, but in those of their successors.

This new society, the kingdom of heaven upon earth, is an entity distinct from the Jewish synagogue. Modern critics are not slow to remind us that Jesus always lived as a conscientious Jew ; that He paid His visits regularly to the temple ; that He inculcated obedience to those who sat on the chair of Moses ; and that He frequently and expressly stated that He would not destroy one jot or tittle of the law. Nevertheless, Christ made important amendments in the law, especially as it was expounded by those who sat on the chair of Moses. We have here an antinomy to solve. Our Lord distinguished between the law and the official teachers of the law ; between, we might say, the Church and the churchmen of Judaism. For the latter He has little else but woes : " Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ; because you are like whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and all filthiness."¹ They are blind guides of the blind, filled with a false zeal, full of rapine and uncleanness, devouring the houses of widows, and working for pride and ambition. It is a scathing denunciation. They are, nevertheless, the teachers of the law ; their words are for the people the words of Moses : " All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do ; but according to their works do ye not ; for they say, and do not."² But what does Christ think of their teaching ? How have they graced the chair of Moses ? " They bind heavy and unsupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders ; but with a finger of their own they will not move them."³ . . . Woe to you, lawyers, also, because you load men with burdens they cannot bear.⁴ . . . Woe to you lawyers, because you have taken away the key of knowledge." They have left the sheep without a shepherd ;⁵ when they teach men, it is as blind leaders of the blind, and both fall into the pit ;⁶ when they make proselytes, it is condemn them to hell ;⁷ when

¹ Matt xxiii. 27.

⁵ Matt. ix. 36.

² *ib.* 3.

⁶ *ib.* xv. 4.

³ *ib.* 4.

⁴ Luke xi. 46.

⁷ *ib.* xxiii. 15.

they expound the commandments, it is to transgress them,¹ for they make void the law of God for their own tradition ;² in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias : " This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men."³ No wonder they lack the authoritative influence of Moses, though they are his representatives ; no wonder the people throng around Christ : " And the multitudes were in admiration at His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." It is only in a very limited sense, therefore, that Jesus can be said to commend the authority of the official teachers of Judaism.

Jesus is not merely a puritan, bringing the people back to the strict letter of the law. To the commands of Moses He frequently opposes the " I say " of the gospel. " You have heard that it was said : an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ;⁴ but I say to you not to resist evil."⁵ For Him, the law of Moses is capable of improvement : " And the Pharisees coming to Him asked, tempting Him : is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause ? . . . What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder. They say to Him : why, then, did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and put away ? He said to them : Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives ; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery ; and he that marries her that is put away commits adultery."⁶ Jesus has come, indeed, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law. But what a change that fulfilment implies ! " The law and the prophets were till John. Since that time the kingdom is preached."⁷ John marks a crisis in the life of the law. In the former stage, the law and the prophets were supreme ; in the latter stage, they give place to the

¹ Matt. xv. 3.² *ib.* 6.³ Mark vii. 6.⁴ Exod. xxi. 24 ; Deut. xix. 21.⁵ Matt. v. 38.⁶ Matt. xix. 4-9.⁷ Luk. xvi. 16.

gospel. We have already seen that the gospel is not merely a new presentation of the law, a clearing away of the traditions of the Pharisees, but a new revelation. Jesus has come to establish a new testament or covenant, which will replace the old: "This is the chalice, the New Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you."¹ As Moses had sealed the old testament with sacrificial blood, so Christ seals the new covenant in like manner. This is the testament foretold by the prophets, and prefigured by the law. In establishing it, Jesus is fulfilling in the highest sense both the law and the prophets. Certain features are common to the two testaments—the moral precepts. In such cases the law will persevere in all its integrity: "Not one jot or tittle of it will fall." Certain features of the old order were typical of better things in the new, and these "beggarly elements" will be fulfilled in their antitypes. Certain features are proper to the Old Testament, and these will find no place in the New. Such are the ceremonial and civil laws. Jesus applies these principles to various legal obligations during His ministry.

The first is the Jewish fasts: "And the disciples of John and the Pharisees used to fast; and they come and say to Him: Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples do not fast? Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and they shall fast in those days."² Jesus here plainly dispenses His disciples from the Jewish obligation. He then goes on to justify His action in two parables, which manifest the dualism of the law and the gospel: "No one sews a piece of new cloth to an old garment; otherwise the new piecing takes away from the old, and there is made a greater rent. And no man puts new wine into old bottles; otherwise the new wine will burst the bottles, and the wine will be spilled, and the bottles lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles." Here we are taught the imprudence of incor-

¹ Luk. xxii. 20.

² Mark. ii. 18-20.

porating in the new dispensation observances that were proper to the old.

Again, every adult Jew was bound by the law¹ to pay half a shekel (or a didrachma) every year towards the maintenance of the temple ritual: "And when they were come to Capharnaum, those who collected the didrachmas came to Peter and said to him: Does not your master pay the didrachmas? He said: Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? And he said: of strangers. Jesus said to him: then the children are free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea and cast in a hook, and that fish which shall first come up take, and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater (*i.e.*, a shekel); take that and give it to them for Me and for thee." Here Jesus claims exemption from the Mosaic tax, for the children of the kingdom. The time is at hand, as He tells us elsewhere,² when the kingdom will replace the temple, when Jerusalem will cease to be the centre of divine service, when God shall be worshipped in spirit and in truth throughout the world. It is only for children of the kingdom, however, that Jesus claims exemption. Hence, He commanded the leper, whom He healed at the beginning of the mission, to show himself to the priest and offer the gifts commanded by Moses.³ It is for the same reason—because few are exempt—that Jesus commands Peter to pay the didrachmas, "that we may not scandalise them."

The temple is still more holy than the didrachma; it is the very heart of Judaism, the most holy thing on earth, the exclusive centre of divine worship. If there is anything in Judaism beyond the reach of Jesus, surely it is the temple; if He dispenses with its service in His new kingdom, then Christianity is a completely new entity, not a reformed Judaism. Now, Jesus is Lord of the temple: "Have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple break the sabbath, and are without blame? But

¹ Exod. xxx. 13.

² John iv. 23.

³ Mark i. 44.

I tell you, that there is here one greater than the temple."¹ On two occasions during His ministry, our Lord cleared the temple of the commercial traffic which disgraced it. He did so without any commission from the priests, for He could not allow His Father's house to be converted into a den of thieves. The righteous indignation of Jesus on these occasions shows that the temple was a good and holy thing for its own time. This is likewise the substance of His remarks to the Samaritan woman.² But the temple worship will soon have run its course : " Woman, believe me, that the time comes, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father."³ This time shall be accomplished, when Christ shall have offered up the one great sacrifice of the new law, the fulfilment and antitype of the sacrifices of the temple. This is the sacrifice of which He spoke at the last supper : " Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of their sins."⁴ When the world has been redeemed by this great sacrifice, there will be no further need of the temple ; for its sacrifices will be replaced by the clean oblation foretold by Malachy. We are not surprised, therefore, to hear from Christ, that within a single generation the temple will be desecrated, that a stone of it shall not be left upon a stone, and that, consequently, the ritual and priesthood, which serve the temple, will collapse never to revive again.

We shall take just one other example of Christ's attitude to the law. The observance of the sabbath is a precept of prime importance in the Old Testament : " Keep My sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary ; I am the Lord."⁵ This observance gives rise to endless casuistry on the part of the Scribes and Pharisees. The " traditions of men " had grown up around it ; so that the observance, demanded by the leaders of Jewish orthodoxy, was well-nigh impossible. Jesus frequently gave offence, by ignoring this tyrannical legalism. On one occasion the disciples plucked ears of corn on the sabbath, as they passed through the country : " And the

¹ Matt. xii. 6.² John iv. 23.³ *ib.* 21.⁴ Matt. xxvi. 28.⁵ Levit. xxvi. 22.

Pharisees, seeing them, said to Him : Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful on the sabbath."¹ Jesus makes a twofold reply : first, their tradition is not in accordance with the law ; secondly, the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath.

In view of all this, we need not be surprised to find " the Jews agreed among themselves, that if anyone should confess Him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."² But how could Christ truly say, that " one jot or title of the law shall not pass till all is fulfilled " ? ³ He looked rather at the spirit, than the letter of the law : " The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath."⁴ Its end was the moral perfection of man, which consists in the love of God and of the neighbour. Jesus, therefore, reduces the whole law to two great commandments : " Thou shalt love thy Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets."⁵ Again, the whole law is observed, if we fulfil the golden rule of Christian morality : " All things, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets."⁶ From these passages it is obvious that our Lord speaks only of the moral law—the decalogue—when He says that heaven and earth will pass, before a jot or title of the law. The ceremonial law could never be reduced to the golden rule ; the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye—could never be reduced to the love of God and of the neighbour. The context, in which Christ uses the words, also shows that He speaks of the moral law. In St. Matthew, they form part of the sermon on the mount, in which Christ proposes His great code of morality. He is treating of good works, precisely as they differ from the legal justice of the Pharisees : " So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not think I am come to

¹ Matt. xii. 1.² John ix. 22.³ Matt. v. 17.⁴ Mark ii. 27.⁵ Matt. xxii. 37.⁶ *ib.* vii. 12.

destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. . . . For I tell you, that unless your justice abounds more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."¹ Good works, He proclaims, will continue to be necessary in the new dispensation ; but the legal observances of the Pharisees will be of no avail. St. Luke gives the words in a different context, but the association of ideas is the same. Legal justice is useless ; what is required is a morally good life : " You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts ; for that which is high before men is an abomination before God. The law and the prophets were till John ; from that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone uses violence towards it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one title of the law to fall. Everyone who puts away his wife commits adultery, and he that marries her that is put away commits adultery."² In their punctilious observance of minor points, the Pharisees had neglected the solid morality of the decalogue.³ With the coming of the gospel the moral law has been again set forth in its true perspective ; but the Pharisees offer violence to the gospel. Finally, our Lord states in its full rigour a moral precept, on which Moses had yielded to the hardness of their hearts.⁴ The moral law, and that alone, will remain unchanged. Christians will serve the same God, and observe the same moral precepts, as the Jews have done in the past. Not a jot or title of the decalogue will fall ; it is only more fully proposed and explained. Morality is placed on a solid basis : " Be perfect as your heavenly Father." The false commentaries of the Pharisees are corrected ; the importance of interior sanctity is emphasised ; evil thoughts and desires are forbidden ; a forced concession of Moses is withdrawn ; and, finally, the evangelical counsels are proposed, the flower of Christian morality.

When the Pharisees asked our Lord when the kingdom would come, He " answered them and said : The kingdom of

¹ Matt. v. 16-20.

² Luke xvi. 15-(20).

³ Matt. xxiii. 24.

⁴ cfr. Matt. xix. 8.

God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say : behold here or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is among you.”¹ It is therefore in a certain sense already established. “The law and the prophets were till John ; since that time the kingdom is preached, and everyone uses violence towards it.”² The violent are chiefly the Pharisees ; and their opposition is, to a large extent, successful, for the kingdom has not yet come in power : ³ “Christ has first to suffer, and be rejected by this generation.”⁴ What consequences will follow this rejection ! “Have you never read in the Scriptures : the stone, which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner ? By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes. Therefore, I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whatsoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind to powder.”⁵ The new order of things is not yet completely established ; the kingdom has not yet been taken from the Jews ; the stone has not yet fallen on those that reject it. All this will be fulfilled, when the kingdom comes in power,⁶ or as St. Matthew has it, when the Son of Man shall come in His kingdom : “As it came to pass in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat and drink . . . and the flood came and destroyed them. Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot. . . . And in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed.”⁷ The kingdom will then be established in power ; for its enemies, like the Sodomites, shall be destroyed, and their opposition

¹ Luk. xvii. 20. The word *ἐντός* usually has the meaning of “within,” but it is occasionally used to denote “among.” It is found twice with this sense in Zenophon. The word must mean “among” in the present context, for the Pharisees alone are addressed, and if they have the kingdom within them, all Christ’s woes against them are false. He tells us that they neither enter, nor let others enter, and that they shall be rejected in favour of the Gentiles.

² Luke xvi. 16.

³ Mark viii. 39.

⁴ Luk. xvii. 25.

⁵ Matt. xxi.

⁶ Mark viii. 39 ; Cfr. Appendix A.

⁷ Luk. xvii. 26.

broken ; then the stone will crush to powder those who reject it : " In that hour he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away."¹ The discourse on the *parousia*, recorded by the three synoptic evangelists, tells us how and when these predictions are to be fulfilled : " When you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by an army, know that the desolation thereof is at hand . . . for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations ; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations are fulfilled."²

Is it not to the fall of Jerusalem that we are to look for this coming in power—whether of the kingdom, or of Christ in the kingdom ? In this connection it is interesting to note the form of the questions, which introduce the discourse on the *parousia*. According to Mark and Luke, the apostles ask : " What shall be the sign, when these things (desecration and destruction of the temple) are about to happen ? " Matthew puts the same question in the form : " What shall be the sign of Thy coming ? " The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple here clearly represent a coming of Christ. It is likewise a coming in power. Here the rejection of the Jews is finally consummated ; here they are crushed to powder by the rejected stone. The destruction of the temple removes the most powerful enemy of the kingdom. Henceforth, it has no rival organisation to contend with, no rival priests and Pharisees, " who neither enter themselves, nor let others enter " ; the law and the prophets, that were till John, cease to be quoted against the gospel ;

¹ Luke xvii. 31. The advice to flee shows that there is question here only of a passing calamity. When there is question of the general judgment, flight is impossible ; for the angels will go forth to the uttermost bounds of the earth. The same conclusion follows from the fact, that only one of the grinders and one of the sleepers will be taken (in the same passage). The likeness of these words to Luke xxi. 21 (where there is question of the fall of Jerusalem), bears out our theory in two ways. It shows (1) that here in xvii. there is no question of the final judgment ; (2) it shows that the coming of the Son of Man here in xvii. is the same as the event foretold in xxi., *i.e.*, the fall of Jerusalem.

² Luk. xxi. 20-24.

those who used violence against it are killed or led into captivity ; the kingdom will henceforth face the world with undivided forces. The fall of Jerusalem, however, is not exclusively the coming in power, but rather the consummation of a series of changes, all leading to the revelation of the kingdom in power. After Christ had announced to the Pharisees that the kingdom was already among them ; even after he had sealed the New Testament with His blood, He had still to send His Holy Spirit to the Church, to teach her all truth. In this coming of the Spirit, St. Peter saw the fulfilment of the Prophet Joel : ¹ " I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." All 'this may well claim to be the beginning of power ; the fall of Jerusalem was its consummation.

As there are two phases of the kingdom, one on earth, the other in heaven, so there shall be two comings of Christ, one to establish in power the earthly kingdom, to consolidate it for its work among men, the other to bring that kingdom to a close, and formally inaugurate the kingdom in heaven. The fall of Jerusalem will be but the beginning of a new era on earth, " the times of the nations," when the Jews will be led captive once more, and the kingdom preached without hindrance to the Gentile nations.² This era is called " the times of the nations," because the nations will then be given an opportunity of bringing forth the fruits of the vineyard, which has been taken from the Jews.³ It is of this coming of Christ, a coming of the Son of Man to consolidate His kingdom, that we are to understand the predictions in Matthew xvi. 28, and x. 23. In the former, the coming of Christ is identified with the coming of the kingdom in power, as appears from the parallel passages of St. Mark and St. Luke. It is an event which will soon come : " Amen, I say to you, some of those who stand here shall not taste death, till they see "—the kingdom of God (Luke), the kingdom of God coming in power (Mark), the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matthew). It is still a little way off ; for we may

¹ *Acts* ii. 16.² *Luk.* xxi. 20-24.³ *Matt.* xxi. 43.

infer from the words of Christ that many will die, before they see its fulfilment. This fits in exactly with the explanation we have given; for during the forty years, that elapsed between the prophecy and the fulfilment, most of Christ's hearers must have passed away.

In the tenth chapter of Matthew we have a similar prediction: "Amen, I say to you, that you shall not finish the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes." In both passages in Matthew, the same event is predicted, the coming of the Son of Man. The evangelist, it is true, seems to connect the event foretold with the Galilean mission of the apostles, which was completed before Christ's death. A closer study, however, shows that this is not so. St. Matthew is here evidently grouping instructions that relate to two different missions, one the Galilean mission of the apostles and disciples during Christ's life, the other a universal mission after His death. The Galilean mission, as we infer from St. Luke, was not marked by any of the tribulations here predicted: "And going out, they went about through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. . . . And the apostles, on their return, told Him all they had done, and taking them He went aside into a desert place."¹ Again: "the seventy-two returned to Him with joy, saying: Lord, even the devils are subject to us in Thy name."

In the second place, the internal evidence of Matthew's record proves beyond doubt, that he speaks of two distinct missions: "These twelve Jesus sent, saying: go ye not into the way of the Gentiles; and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go ye to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."² There is evidently a transition here; for, the latter part of the discourse is irreconcilable with a mission limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew has introduced into the context words, which relate to a mission after Christ's

¹ Luk. ix.

² Matt. x.

death, when the apostles would rejoice, not because the devils are subject to them, but because they are deemed worthy to suffer for Christ. He is speaking in verses 22-25 of an unlimited mission, a mission during which the apostles will be persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles, when they shall be brought before Jewish councils and Gentile kings. These prophecies were literally fulfilled in the first age of Christianity, as we learn from the *Acts of the Apostles*. The prediction in Matthew x. 23, falls into line, therefore, with Matthew xvi. 28 and Mark viii. 39. It is a word of consolation to the apostles in their arduous labours, a promise that Christ will consolidate His kingdom in the midst of their tribulations.

We have now seen that the vineyard will be taken from the Jews, and given to the nations, that they may have an opportunity of bringing forth the fruits, which the Jews failed to produce in the Old Testament period.¹ This new state of things will last till the times of the nations are fulfilled.² But a day will come, when the kingdom on earth will have run its course, when its citizens will be either incorporated into the new kingdom in heaven, or cast into everlasting fire. This day will be a day of judgment and separation: "But the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. Even as the cockle, therefore, is gathered up and burnt with fire; so shall it be at the end of the world."³ Then Christ will come on the clouds of heaven with his angels, and render to everyone according to his works.⁴ As He has come to establish the initial stage of His kingdom on earth, so He will come to usher in the final stage in heaven. When shall this great day come? "Of that day no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, not the Son, but the Father alone."⁵ Yet, it may be set down as belonging to the distant future. The seed sown by Christ germinates slowly, and it must have time to ripen to a full harvest.⁶ The kingdom on earth, like the mustard plant, must grow from the smallest of seeds to a great tree sheltering the birds of the air.⁷ The

¹ Matt. xxi. 33 seq.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 27.

² Luke xxi. 24.

⁵ Mark xiii. 32.

⁷ Matt. xiii. 32.

³ Matt. xiii. 40.

⁶ Mark xii. 26.

Gentile husbandman must be allowed time to produce the fruits of the vineyard, which the Jews mismanaged during the Old Testament period.¹ Jerusalem must be trodden down by Gentiles, and its people once more dispersed among the nations, till the times of the nations are fulfilled.² Finally, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then shall the consummation come.³ During this period, the kindness of Magdalen to the Saviour will be recounted throughout the whole world,⁴ and all nations will be taught to observe the commandments of Christ.⁵

Professor Harnack fails to see in the preaching of Jesus the foundation of a church, least of all a universal church. Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ; and when He sends forth His disciples, He places the same limits on their mission.⁵ Here, he thinks, we find the genuine teaching of Christ ; the passages recording a universal mission, given by our Lord during the forty days, are but the expression of the Christian mind after it had seen the development of the gospel for fifty years. The apostles, no doubt, established a universal church before their death, but then, "the chasm which separates Jesus from the apostles has never been bridged over, nor can it be." We shall consider briefly some of the reasons that lead us to think that Professor Harnack is wrong in his analysis. In estimating the extent of Christ's kingdom, we must first remember that our Lord claimed to be the Messiah, the king foretold by the prophets. This appears most clearly in the history of the passion : "And Pilate asked Him : Art Thou the king of the Jews ? But He answered : thou sayest it."⁶ Again : "Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was :—Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Then the chief priests said to Pilate : write not the king of the Jews."⁷ This claim is, in fact, the chief charge made against Jesus by the Sanhedrim : "We have found this man perverting our nation,

¹ Matt. xxi. 43.² Luk. xxi. 24. ³ Matt. xxiv. 14 ; Mark xiii. 10.⁴ Mark xiv. 9.⁵ Matt. xxviii. 20.⁶ Mark xv. 2.⁷ John xix. 19-21.

and saying that He is Christ the king."¹ Now, the prophets had foretold that although salvation is from the Jews,² nevertheless, the Gentiles will share it. Jesus was familiar with these prophets, as His sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth proves.³ In this very discourse, He draws attention to certain actions of the prophets, which foreshadow the call of the Gentiles: "In truth I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth, and to none of them was Elias sent but to Sarepta, a widow of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus, and none of them was healed but Naaman the Syrian." His audience at once understood the parable: "And all those in the synagogue hearing these things were filled with anger." A moment before, "all gave testimony to Him, and they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth." If Jesus claims to be the Messiah foretold, why attribute to Him a programme opposed to the prophets He has come to fulfil? John the Baptist understands much better than the critics the extent of Christ's mission, when he says: "Behold the lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."⁴

When we examine the gospels in detail, we find none of the narrow-minded nationalism suggested by Harnack. So little does our Lord think of an exclusively Jewish kingdom, that the Jews will scarcely find a place in it at all. Our Lord compares the Jews to bad husbandmen, who have mismanaged His vineyard. The conclusion is tragic: "He will bring these evil men to an evil end, and let out His vineyard to other husbandmen. . . . Therefore, I say to you, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof."⁵ The same idea runs through the parable of the marriage-feast. The king was angry, and sending His armies, he destroyed those murderers and burnt their city. Then he said to his servants: "Go ye into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage."

¹ Luk. xxiii. 2.² John iv. 22.³ Luk. iv. 17 seq.⁴ John i. 29.⁵ Matt. xxi.

The prophet Isaias had already predicted that only a remnant of the Jews would inherit the promises. The Baptist had repeated this in stronger language: "Think not within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father. For I tell you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree." What echoes of these prophecies we find in the preaching of Jesus! "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into exterior darkness."¹ In another context our Lord says: "Strive ye to enter by the narrow gate, for many shall strive to enter, and shall not be able . . . there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. And (people) shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."² The seed of the gospel only requires good soil, whether it be among the Jews or the Gentiles: "The sower is the Son of Man, and the field is the world (not Palestine)." The good example of the faithful is likewise to be a light, not for a class or for a nation, but for the whole world: "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Again, when the apostles find fault with Magdalen for extravagance, our Lord replies: "Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she has done shall be told for a memorial of her."³

In texts like the preceding where the teaching is only implicit, as in the parables, or incidental, as in the case of Magdalen, we have the surest guarantees of a faithful record of Christ's teaching. The interpolator never attempted to labour out a parable, and foist it on the gospel. A direct

¹ Matt. viii. 11.² Luk. xiii.³ Mark xiv. 9.

statement in a few words would answer his purpose infinitely better. Hence, were we to agree with Professor Harnack in rejecting Matthew xxviii. (*dato, non concessio*), our position would remain practically as strong as before. The gospels are not wanting, however, in the plainest statements of Christ's universalism. In the discourse on the *parousia*, Mark records the words: "And unto all nations the gospel must first be preached." St. Matthew gives a more detailed account: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come."¹ As all nations shall be called to the kingdom, so they shall be called to judgment, when the kingdom has run its course: "And all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another . . . to those on His right He will say: come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you."² The whole context implies that the blessed have already passed through the earthly province of the kingdom. Again, among the instructions which Christ gives the apostles, we read the following: "But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."³ In giving them the commission recorded by St. Matthew,⁴ therefore, our Lord is but fulfilling promises He has already made; He is putting in practice the doctrine He has already taught. In teaching a universalist salvation, He is acting in strict accordance with the prophets He has come to fulfil.

It remains for us to explain the facts quoted by our opponents, the Jewish mission of Christ and of the apostles. The instructions to the apostles found in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew prove, as we have seen, that the apostles received two distinct missions. The first was confined to the Jews; and in this mission the apostles were not the only labourers. We learn from St. Luke that the seventy-

¹ Matt. xxiv. 14.

² Matt. xxv. 34.

³ *ib.* x. 17-18.

⁴ *ib.* xxviii. 19.

two were also sent to heal the sick, and to preach the kingdom. This mission was only temporary ; for we are told that when the apostles returned, our Lord "took them aside into a desert place apart." This mission is also regarded as a definite event in the past, when Christ says at the last supper : "When I sent you (ὅτε ἀπέστειλα) without purse and script and shoes, did you want for anything (ὑστερήσατε) ?" ¹ In this mission the apostles organised no society, they enjoyed no special jurisdiction. It was but a trial, a preparation for a greater mission yet to come. In the instructions recorded by St. Matthew, ² this greater mission is already foreshadowed. We find the same idea set forth in greater detail in the discourse on the *parousia*. The apostles will go forth on an unlimited mission ; their testimony will be given before Gentiles as well as Jews ; they will be brought before governors and kings as well as councils ; they will, in short, be hated by all men, because they come in the name of Christ. Their work will not be, as heretofore, to prepare the way for the Master, but rather to follow in His footsteps : "It is enough that the disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household." ³ It will not be a temporary mission, but a life-long work : "And you shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren and kinsmen, and some of you they will put to death." And, again : "You shall be hated by all men for My name's sake ; but he that shall persevere to the end shall be saved." The great commission—"Going, therefore, teach all nations"—is not the invention of a pious Christian, as Harnack would have us believe ; it is the fulfilment of promises made frequently by Christ during His public ministry.

Our Lord says : "I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But what a lesson we learn from the context in which these words occur ! A poor Syrian woman came to ask a favour, and Jesus replied that His mission was to Jews alone : "But she came and adored Him saying : Lord, help me." Then we see the true nature of Christ's

¹ Luk. xxii. 35.

² Matt. x. 17-18.

³ *ib.* x. 25.

teaching: "Suffer *first* the children to be filled, for it is not good to take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs." The woman humbly replied: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. And Jesus answering said to her: woman, great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt."¹ The children of the house must first be filled, but after them the dogs will receive their share. The whole incident reminds us forcibly of Christ's action on another occasion, when His blessed mother asks Him to work a miracle at the marriage-feast of Cana. He protests that His hour is not yet come; nevertheless, He complies with the request. If Jesus "goes not into the way of the Gentiles," He does not reject them if they come. His attitude towards the Roman centurion gives us another example of His all-embracing love: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith even in Israel . . . and Jesus said to the centurion: go and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee."

The universalism of Jesus was not a development of His later ministry, as some critics would have us believe. We find it in His first great discourse, the sermon on the mount: "And His fame went through Syria . . . and many people followed Him from Galilee and from the Decapolis,² and from Jerusalem and Judea and beyond the Jordan;³ and those about *Tyre and Sidon*, a great multitude, hearing the things which He did, came to Him." All these Jesus teaches without distinction; and His teaching is in keeping with His action. There is no distinction of Jew and Gentile in the kingdom: "You are the salt of *the earth*, but if the salt lose its savour wherewith shall it (the earth) be salted? . . . You are the light of *the world*. . . So let your light shine before men, that seeing your good works they may glorify your Father, who is in heaven. . . . You have heard it said: thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy: but I say to you:

¹ Mark vii. 27; Matt. xv. 24-27.

² The multitude from Tyre and Sidon, and probably from Decapolis, must have been largely composed of Gentiles, who came, like the centurion and the Syrian woman, to see the great wonder-worker of Israel.

³ Matt. iv. 25.

love your enemies, that you may be the children of your Father, who makes His sun rise upon the good and the bad, and rains on the just and the unjust. If you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute only your brethren, what do you more? Do not the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”¹ These are not the sentiments of a narrow-minded Jew. Jesus is prepared to receive and to teach all who follow Him: “Come to me all you that labour, and I will refresh you.” If He has taken Palestine for His own personal mission, He has given the apostles the world for theirs. It was but reasonable that He, the promised One of Israel, should devote His brief ministry to the heirs of promise; but in the Messianic plan sketched by Jesus, and by the prophets before Him, the gospel is not restricted to Israel. The only Jewish privilege recognised by our Lord consists in this, that the gospel message will be first proposed to the chosen people: “Suffer *first* the children to be filled.”

We have now seen that Jesus preached a new order of things; that He made a sharp distinction between those who believe in Him, and those who do not; that the former compose a kingdom in which He is king, a flock of which He is the shepherd. When He is about to return to the Father, He provides that His flock shall not be disintegrated into individualistic units, without bond or organisation; He leaves other shepherds, who are to rule the flock with authority, as His representatives. We have also seen that this flock or kingdom is not merely a department of the synagogue, but a new entity, grouped around a new revelation. This revelation is not confined to a single generation, or to a particular nation; it is bequeathed to all men for all time. In tracing the Messianic plan of Jesus, we have found one by one the distinguishing features of the apostolic Church. This fact reacts in turn on our argument; for, are not the apostles the best interpreters of Christ’s mind?

¹ Matt. v.

CHAPTER II.—THE APOSTOLATE.

AT an early period in His ministry, Jesus selected twelve of His disciples, and made them the objects of His special care. The three synoptic evangelists record this important fact, and give us the names of the twelve. St. John refers to it incidentally: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"² They are known in the gospels as the twelve apostles or disciples, or simply as "the twelve."¹ These twelve, whatever their title, loom largely in the evangelical records. They form an inner circle around Jesus—a distinct body, called together by a special vocation: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you; and I have appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."³ Even after Judas has disappeared, they are still "the twelve," the body corporate, which has borne that title from the beginning: "Then was He seen by Cephas, and after that by the twelve."⁴ The gospels, the *Acts*, the *Apocalypse*, the epistles of St. Paul, and all the early literature refer to the twelve apostles. Such an array of testimony can leave no doubt that Jesus really selected twelve of His disciples, and gave them a special mission. In forming an apostolic college of this particular number, our Lord seems to have had in view some figurative reference to the Messianic kingdom. The apostles, He tells us, will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. St. Peter seems to have been anxious to maintain this number after the Ascension; he had Matthias selected to fill the place vacated by Judas. With the call of Paul and Barnabas, however, this arrangement again broke down; and no further attempt was made to restore the apostolic college to the tribal number.

¹ Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 14; Luk. vi. 13.² John vi. 70.³ John xv. 16.⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

The title "apostle" is frequently applied to the twelve in the gospels. St. Luke tells us that it was given to them by our Lord Himself: "And when day came, He called His disciples, and chose from among them twelve, whom He also called apostles."¹ The use of this special title was due to the fact that the apostles were *sent* by Christ to preach His kingdom: "He called the twelve, and began to send them (*ἀποστέλλειν*) two by two."² Again, we read: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so I also sent them (*ἀπέστειλα*) into the world."³ The word literally signifies *one sent*, a messenger. Our Lord says: "A servant is not greater than his master, nor an apostle greater than he who sent him." The Jews had their "apostles," or messengers, in the second and third centuries, when Judaism had its centre at Jamnia. There is no evidence, however, that they used the word in apostolic times. When the Jews tell St. Paul at Rome, that they have not been warned of his coming by word or by letter, they appear to have no technical term for messenger. Indeed, they do not appear to have any special "apostolic" institution at all; they merely say: "Neither did any of the brethren who came here speak ill of thee."⁴ Again, we do not find the word "apostle" applied to St. Paul, when he came to Damascus to persecute the church; though he was certainly on that occasion the "apostle" of the high priest. The word was not borrowed from the Jews, therefore. Neither is it of Scriptural origin; for it occurs only once in the whole Septuagint. All this goes to show that the apostolate is a distinctly Christian institution. Eusebius, indeed, tells us that he read in the writings of the elders, that the Jews sent their apostles through the world, at the beginning of the Christian era, slandering the name of Christ, as a new heresy; but this statement does not seem to have any value, as a proof of a special Jewish apostolate, or as a proof of a technical use of the word "apostle."

It is scarcely necessary to mention the "apostles of the churches," spoken of by St. Paul. They are merely messengers,

¹ Luk. vi. 13.

² Mark. vi. 7.

³ John xvii. 18.

⁴ Acts xxviii. 21.

or letter-carriers, between the Christian communities. "I have thought it necessary," he says, "to send you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-labourer and fellow-soldier, but your apostle, and minister to my wants."¹ Epaphroditus was carrier of the alms sent by the Philippians to St. Paul; he was consequently their apostle, their messenger or agent. We are here concerned only with the apostles of Christ.

The apostolic office, in the discourses of our Lord, seems to be chiefly a mission, a work of testimony: "But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth."² The instructions recorded in the tenth chapter of the gospel of St. Matthew follow the same lines: "And you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to say; for it will be given you what to say." The apostles will testify to the teaching of Christ, the word of the kingdom: "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light; and that which ye hear in the ear, preach ye on the housetops."³ The apostles are given power to bind and loose, and power to forgive sins in particular. These are their duties towards citizens of the kingdom, over whom they are called to rule. Their primary duty, however, seems to be the propagation of the gospel, the teaching of all nations "to observe whatsoever I have commanded you."⁴

The same idea is strongly in evidence in St. Peter's speech, on the occasion of the election of Matthias: "Wherefore, of those men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, from the baptism of John till He was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness of His Resurrection." St. Peter lays special stress on the Resurrection, because this is the great proof of Christ's doctrine and claims. The witness must, nevertheless, be able to give testimony of the Lord's

¹ Phil. ii. 25. ² Acts i. 8. ³ Matt. x. 27. ⁴ Matt. xxviii. 20.

life, from the baptism of John to the Ascension. Why should this be required, unless the new apostle is to be a witness to all Christ's teaching? This testimony is the ministry of the word. "It is not good," says St. Peter, "that we (apostles) should leave the word and serve tables."¹ The ability to testify to Christ's teaching is only a qualification for the apostolate; something more is required to make one an actual apostle. Without this distinction, the election of Matthias would have been meaningless. The disciples from whom he was chosen—and indeed the disciples from whom the twelve were chosen—would have equal claims to apostleship; and they would have them independently of any election. The apostle must be *sent* by Christ; a mission must supervene on his competency to bear witness. It is for this reason that our Lord Himself was called on to make the appointment of Matthias, to choose in the lottery the man He is pleased to send. To be chosen and sent by Christ—this is the essence of apostleship.

It is from St. Paul, however, that we can best learn the nature of the apostolic office. Paul's own claims to apostleship were frequently called in question; and he had to defend his apostolic character against bitter enemies, who followed him to Corinth, Antioch and Galatia. He was thus forced to explain his own position; and his letters teach us many useful lessons on the nature and importance of his mission. His adversaries are distinguishable as false brethren, "deceitful workmen, who transform themselves into apostles of Christ," and commend themselves by their own letters. To these apostles of men, St. Paul loves to oppose the apostles of Jesus Christ: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."² He has been called to his high office, not by man but by God. He has the same God-given gospel as the other apostles: "For I give you to understand brethren, that the gospel preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it or learn it of man, but by the revelation of God."³ Nor even from the apostles, who were before him, has he

¹ Acts vi.² Gal. i. 1.³ Gal. i. 11-12.

received this gospel: "But when it pleased Him, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood. Neither went I to Jerusalem to the apostles, who were before me; but I went to Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus." ¹

The authenticity of his gospel, and consequently his claim to apostleship, is proved by the assistance which God has given him: "For I suppose that I have done nothing less than the great apostles. For, though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge . . . they are ministers of Christ; I am more, in many more labours, in prison more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often." ² And again: "I have in no way come short of those who are above measure apostles, though I be nothing. Yet, the signs of my apostleship have been wrought in you, in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." His apostleship is also proved from the fact that he has seen the Lord, and received from Him a special mission: "Am not I free? Am not I an apostle? Have not I seen the Lord? Are not you my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet to you I am. You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defence with those who examine me is this." ³ Again, he tells us: "After that, He (Christ) was seen by James, then by all the apostles, and last of all He was seen by me, as by one born out of due time. . . . But, by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace in me has not been void, but I have laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God in me." ⁴ In all this, the apostle is a witness of Christ, so that, "if Christ is not risen . . . we are found false witnesses of God."

So far, St. Paul has been answering objections urged against his claims to apostleship. The authenticity of his gospel, the fruitfulness of his mission, and the hardships he has endured, are all so many evidences that he is a genuine apostle. What constitutes him such? What makes him more than prophet

¹ Gal. i. 15-17.

² 2 Cor. xi.

³ 1 Cor. xi.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv

or evangelist? We have already heard him ask: "Am not I an apostle? Have not I seen the Lord?" It is necessary, therefore, to have seen the Lord. It is likewise necessary to have received a mission: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach unless they are sent?"¹ To be an apostle of Jesus Christ is to be His messenger, to have seen Him and to have been sent by Him. Hence, we read: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . . by whom (Christ) we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith in all nations for His name."² Again: "Christ sent me, not to baptise but to preach the gospel"; hence that beautiful metaphor of the ambassador: "For God was in Christ . . . and He hath placed in us the words of reconciliation. For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us."³ His testimony and ministry are therefore Christ's: "When I came to you, I came . . . declaring the testimony of Christ"⁴; and again: "Let a man so account us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."

St. Paul is not merely an apostle, one sent, but an "apostle of Jesus Christ"—an ambassador, specially called and sent by Him in person. He is sent to bear testimony, to preach the gospel, to be the minister of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles, to be the dispenser of the mysteries of God, to bring forth children of the kingdom: "For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you."⁵ Although St. Paul frequently speaks of apostles, he is very careful in his use of the title. He never applies it to his disciples, such as Timothy or Titus. If he mentions the two names together, he employs some other word to describe their common ministry: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ."⁶ If he uses the word apostle, he applies it only to himself: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy (his)

¹ Rom. x. 14.² Rom. i. 1.³ 2 Cor. v. 20.⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 1.⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 15.⁶ Phil. i. 1.

brother.”¹ The reservation of the title in this last passage seems to be decisive against the apostleship of Timothy.

St. Paul recognises, however, that there are other apostles besides himself: “God has placed in His Church first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers.”² Among these apostles are “the brethren of the Lord and Cephas.” Barnabas is likewise of their number: “Have we not a right to bring about a sister, as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to do this?”³ Timothy, on the other hand, is never ranked as an apostle; neither is Titus, Tychicus, Silas or Apollos.⁴ The apostolate is strictly limited in extension; in fact, the New Testament seems to warrant the conclusion that at no time were there more than fourteen recognised “apostles of Christ.”

In saying this, we are in direct conflict with a large body of modern scholars, many of whom exaggerate excessively the number of apostles. In his enumerations of the apparitions of Jesus, St. Paul says: “He was seen by Cephas and afterwards by the twelve (δώδεκα) then he was seen by James, and then by all the apostles.” From this passage it is argued that outside the twelve St. Paul contemplates a large circle of apostles; the twelve, it is contended, are only a fraction of “all the apostles.” We must remember, however, that there is question here only of those who were apostles during the forty days. St. Luke makes it clear that there were only eleven apostles during this period. Matthias was elected “to take the place of the ministry and apostleship from which Judas hath by transgression fallen . . . and Matthias was numbered with the eleven apostles.”⁵ There is no evidence of any other apostles during the forty days, or during the period which immediately followed the Ascension. The book of *Acts* opens with a church, in which there are but two grades, the twelve and the multitude. St. Paul was well aware of this fact, for he mentions the twelve in the passage quoted. Who, then, can “all the apostles”

¹ Col. i. 1.

² 1 Cor. xii. 28

Eph. iv. 11.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 5.

⁴ See below.

⁵ Acts, i. 25-26.

be? Not the five hundred, for they are called "brethren," not "apostles." Neither can they be the seventy disciples; for, in the first place, St. Paul would have mentioned the number *seventy*, as he has mentioned the number *twelve*; secondly, the seventy are finally lost sight of long before the Ascension, and are never mentioned anywhere by St. Paul; thirdly, we have no evidence that our Lord ever appeared to the seventy; fourthly, the seventy are never spoken of as apostles in apostolic times. There remains no alternative but to identify "all the apostles" with the eleven, or as St. Paul has it, the twelve. The opposition is not between the twelve and all the apostles, but between the latter and the single apostle James. Two verses before, the writer has opposed the twelve to the single apostle Peter; he here changes his terms for the sake of variety, to avoid repeating the expression "the twelve."

We may remark here that this is the only passage in which St. Paul speaks of "the twelve." What does he mean by the term? There were actually only eleven; why not say "the eleven"? He seems to have in mind not the particular number, but the apostolic college; in other words, all the apostles. The apostolic college had long been known as the twelve; hence, when he speaks of the whole college—even though now diminished in number by the death of Judas—he still uses the corporate title to signify all the apostles. It is well to remember this fact, when we meet references to the twelve in sub-apostolic literature. If St. Paul can use the expression where the actual number is eleven, the apostolic fathers can use it where the number is fourteen—the eleven, Matthias and Paul and Barnabas. If, on the other hand, a large circle of apostles was contemplated, neither St. Paul nor the sub-apostolic writers could reasonably speak of them as "the twelve"; the discrepancy in numbers would have been too great.

It cannot be concluded, I think, that St. Paul has in mind a large number of apostles, when he writes: "God has placed in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers"; or, again, when he asks: "Are all apostles?"

Are all prophets? Are all teachers? " ¹ The apostolate is placed on a different footing from the other offices; hence, even if there is an indefinite number of prophets or teachers, it does not follow that there is, or may be an indefinite number of apostles. In the passages above quoted, as elsewhere, St. Paul always places the apostles in the forefront of his enumeration; they are the first and most important officers in the church. His enumeration is followed in the Corinthian epistle by the exhortation: "Be zealous for spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy." ² He exhorts his readers to seek prophecy, rather than any other gift, because prophecy is the greatest of all. But why should they not seek to be apostles? Is not the apostolate greater than even prophecy? Here without doubt, St. Paul implies that the Holy Ghost will not grant apostleship, as He will grant prophecy and the other gifts. Why? Because the apostles are of a definite limited number; and because their office does not fall under the ordinary providence governing the *charismata*. St. Paul himself seems to be the last of the apostles; for has he not seen Christ, as one born out of due time?

The fact that St. Paul found it necessary to warn the Corinthians against false apostles, ³ does not prove, as some people seem to think, that there was already a large number of genuine apostles. The impostors claimed all the qualifications necessary for true apostleship in the strict sense; indeed, they claimed a higher mission than that of St. Paul himself, and there is no evidence that they were emulating anyone else. It is contended that fraud would have been impossible, "if only a given number of definite individuals had been recognised as apostles." That will depend, of course, on whether or not the *persons imposed upon* knew all about the given number of definite individuals. It is easy for a historian looking back over this period to talk of the definite number recognised as apostles. How many of the faithful in a recently converted community were in a position to know the exact number in the apostolic college? Paul and Barnabas had been added to the twelve by an extraordinary call. How many of the

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29; Eph. iv. 11. ² 1 Cor. xiv. 1. ³ 2 Cor. xi. 13.

ordinary faithful could have said definitely that no one but Paul and Barnabas had been so added? The argument we are criticising proves, indeed, that St. Paul could never recognise the claims of the impostors; but does it prove that a young community could not be imposed on, by men who announced that they, and not St. Paul, were genuine apostles along with the twelve? If the apostle of the Gentiles based his claims on a miraculous intervention, clearly the same line of argument might be adopted by his enemies. Now, the Corinthians were practically dependent on St. Paul for their Christian teaching; if his authority was called in question, how were they to know who, and how many, were genuine apostles?

In later times the word "apostle" was occasionally used with a wider signification; Theodore of Mopsuestia, for instance, speaks of the earliest bishops as ἀπόστολοι. This wide use, however, never became very general; the apostles of the patristic literature are nearly always the twelve. The word appears to have no other meaning for the sub-apostolic writers Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp (and Justin). The *Didache* is the only sub-apostolic document which certainly understands "apostles" in a wider sense: "Every apostle who comes to you, receive as the Lord." Two facts, however, are noticeable about the usage of the *Didache*. The first is that the apostles, from whom all Christian tradition is derived, are no other than the twelve. This is evident from the title of the book—"Teaching of the twelve apostles." The second is that, when used in a wider signification, the word "apostles" is merely a synonym for "prophets": "But concerning apostles and prophets (περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν), act according to the decree of the gospel. Every *apostle* coming to you, receive as the Lord . . . but if he remain three days, he is a false *prophet*. Let the *apostle* receive nothing but bread at his departure; but if he asks for money he is a false *prophet*. . . . From their ways therefore the false prophet and the (true) prophet (ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης καὶ ὁ προφήτης) shall be known." ¹ Notice that

¹ *Didache* xi.

while the prophet and the false prophet are shown to belong to different classes by the repetition of the article, the apostles and prophets are combined as one class under a single *τῶν*. The writer has no difficulty, therefore, in opposing the false prophet to the genuine apostle, and to the genuine prophet indiscriminately. This cannot have been the usage in the time of St. Paul. We read in the epistle to the Ephesians : ¹ " God hath given some to be apostles, others prophets (*τοὺς μὲν . . . τοὺς δέ*) "; and in the first epistle to the Corinthians : " God hath placed in the church first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." The apostles spoken of by St. Paul were evidently distinct from the prophets. The *Didache* furnishes no reason, therefore, for supposing that there was a wide circle of apostles in the time of St. Paul. On the contrary, its title, harmonising so well with the rest of the sub-apostolic literature, shows that the only apostles recognised in apostolic times were those with whose names we are familiar.

Even though the apostolate is strictly limited, it may still include some of the more illustrious missionaries mentioned in the New Testament. Let us consider the evidence. In his epistle to the Romans St. Paul mentions two Christians, who are " distinguished among the apostles." ² The passage has been frequently quoted to prove that these men, Andronicus and Junias, were reckoned by St. Paul as apostles. The reading however is ambiguous. The words are *ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις*, which may mean either *distinguished among the apostles*, or *distinguished in the eyes of the apostles*. Dr. Lightfoot maintains that the former is the more natural interpretation ; and we know that many of the Fathers understood the passage in this sense. Nevertheless there are strong reasons for thinking that the words here bear the other meaning. If Andronicus and Junias were not only apostles, but distinguished among the apostles, it is extraordinary that we hear nothing about their activity in the *Acts*, the epistles of St. Paul, or the Roman tradition. We have no evidence that they fulfilled any or all of the conditions

¹ Eph. iv. 11 ; 1 Cor. xii. 28.

² Rom. xvi. 7.

laid down by St. Paul for true apostleship. Have they seen Christ, or laboured in the gospel? It is very improbable. St. Paul seldom fails to designate as "fellow-workers" those who assist in spreading the gospel; he applies the term to Timothy and Urbanus in this very chapter: yet he gives no such title to Andronicus and Junias. It is easy, on the other hand, to explain why these men should be noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles. They are among the first-fruits of the gospel; they were "in the Lord" before St. Paul; they are his kinsmen, and they have suffered imprisonment for the faith with the apostle himself. It is much more probable, therefore, that Andronicus and Junias were not reckoned by St. Paul as apostles.

Dr. Lindsay¹ quotes the first epistle to the Thessalonians, to prove that Silas and Timothy were apostles. The epistle opens with the words: "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians." In the second chapter we read: "We might have been burdensome to you as apostles of Christ."² The "we," however, does not include Silas and Timothy; it is merely the editorial or writer's plural so often used by St. Paul. A few sentences farther down in the same chapter, he writes: "Because we would fain have come to you, I Paul, once and again; and Satan hindered us." In two verses of the following chapter, Timothy is expressly distinguished from the "we." If Timothy cannot be included, neither can Silas, for both hold the same position in the grammatical structure, to which appeal is made. We have already seen, moreover, that St. Paul takes care to reserve to himself the title *apostle*, even where the name of Timothy is mentioned in immediate connection with his own.

A reference to the apostleship of Apollos is found by Lindsay³ in the first epistle to the Corinthians (IV. 9.). St. Paul has been speaking of himself and Apollos in connection with the divisions in the Corinthian church. He then goes on to reprove his readers for their pride and wilfulness: "Already

¹ *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, page 80.

² 1 Thess. ii. 6, 18; iii. 2, 6.

³ *Loco. cit.*

ye are filled . . . ye have reigned without us ; yea and I would that you did reign, that we also might reign with you. For, I think God hath set forth *us the apostles* last of all, as men doomed to death ; for we are made a spectacle . . . we hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling-place ; we toil with our own hands ; being reviled we bless ; being persecuted we endure." The use of the article, however—*the* apostles—and the nature of the statements which follow show that St. Paul passes from the consideration of Apollos and himself to that of the apostles in general. There is no reason to suppose that Apollos is included in this general apostolate ; on the contrary, he seems to be excluded by the statements which follow ; for Apollos can scarcely have been subjected to the woes here enumerated. Clement of Rome, when writing to this same church forty-five years later, deliberately distinguishes the status of Peter and Paul on the one side, and that of Apollos on the other. The former he calls *apostles*, the latter ¹ an ἀνὴρ δεδοκιμασμένος. We may add that neither Apollos nor Timothy nor Silas fulfilled the conditions required by St. Paul for true apostleship : they were merely evangelists.²

Whether we think of the apostles as the twelve, or as "apostles of Christ," as St. Paul prefers to call them, we find in them from the beginning a centre of authority for the Church. In the mother-church of Jerusalem, the supreme ecclesiastical authority rests in their hands : "Those who had possessions sold them, and brought the proceeds, and laid them at the feet of the apostles . . . and the faithful were persevering in the doctrine and fellowship (κοινωνία) of the apostles, and in the breaking of bread."³ Besides the bond of doctrine, or bond of a school, there is also a bond of fellowship ; and the fellowship is called "the fellowship of the apostles"—a fact which shows that they are the ruling factor in the community. Hence, when complaints have to be made by a section of the faithful, it is to the apostles that appeal is made.

¹ Clem. 47.

² 2 Tim. iv. 5.

³ Acts, ii. 42 ; iv. 34. The word *κοινωνία* is used again by St. Paul : "James and Cephas and John gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Gal. ii. 9.).

They have other work, however, more important than "the service of tables"; they cannot personally superintend the distribution of alms. For this reason, they recommend the selection of seven good men, "whom we may appoint over this business"; and when the selection is made, they appoint the seven to office by imposition of hands. The apostles are clearly not only the teachers, but also the rulers of the community.

The epistles of St. Paul represent the apostles as the supreme teachers, the ambassadors of Christ, the dispensers of the mysteries of Christian knowledge, the guarantee of the purity of Christian doctrine. The Galatians, therefore, received St. Paul "as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ"; and the Thessalonians received his preaching, "not as the word of men, but as it is, indeed, the word of God."¹ The apostle's authority in this respect can best be compared with that of Holy Writ: "Stand fast, therefore, brethren, and hold the traditions, which you have learned whether by word or epistle of ours."² St. Peter expressly makes this comparison, when he says that the unstable wrest the epistles of St. Paul, "as they do the other Scriptures," to their own destruction.³ The apostolic teaching is unchangeable, therefore, as the Scripture itself: "Though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you any other gospel . . . let him be anathema."⁴ It binds even those who have the gift of knowledge from the Holy Ghost: "If any man seem to be a prophet, or rich in spiritual gifts, let him know the things that I write to you, that they are the commandments of the Lord."⁵ Again, St. Paul sends to Corinth his disciple Timothy, "who will remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach everywhere in every church." This is the apostolic *magisterium* or teaching authority.

The apostle has also a power of jurisdiction, which involves a solicitude for all the churches.⁶ This jurisdiction has a judicial phase, which appears when St. Paul excommunicates those who are a scandal to the faithful in the matter of faith

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

⁴ Gal. i. 7.

² 2 Thess. ii. 15.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

⁶ 2 Cor. xi. 28.

or morals ; ¹ and again, when he reinstates the offender after repentance.² Even when he is not called upon to exercise this judicial power, he asserts in unmistakeable terms his right to do so : "What will you?" he writes to the Corinthians : "Shall I come to you with a rod, or in charity and the spirit of meekness?" Again : "I have said before . . . to those that sinned, and to all the rest, that if I come I will not spare."³ "I write these things while absent," he continues, "that when present I may not deal more severely, according to the power which the Lord has given me."

The apostle's jurisdiction has also a legislative phase : "To those that are married, not I, but the Lord commands, that the wife depart not from her husband. . . . To the rest I say, not the Lord, if any brother has a wife that believes not, and if she consents to dwell with him, let him not put her away . . . and so I ordain in all the churches."⁴ The Corinthians understand and respect these claims : "Now, I praise you brethren, that in all things you are mindful of me, and keep my ordinances, as I have delivered them to you."⁵ St. Paul makes regulations, therefore, for the collection of alms, for the conduct of women in church, for the celebration of the Eucharist, even for the use of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.⁶ He expects obedience to all these regulations : "To this end also did I write, that I may know the proof of you, whether you are obedient in all things";⁷ and again : "Our boasting to Titus is found a truth . . . and his affection is more abundant towards you, when he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him."⁸

The apostolate is not merely a magisterial *charism* ; St. Paul is equally a teacher and a ruler ; he requires faith in his doctrine, and obedience to his ordinances. His office cannot be said to be a *charism* in the narrow sense at all—that is, a miraculous working of the free spirit. When he enumerates the various classes of labourers in the church,

¹ 1 Cor. v. 2 ; 2 Thess. iii. 16 ; 1 Tim. i. 20.

² 2 Cor. xiii. 2.

⁶ *ib.* xiv. 26-34.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii.

⁷ 2 Cor. ii. 9.

² 2 Cor. ii. 10.

⁵ *ib.* xi. 2.

⁸ 2 Cor. vii. 15.

he always places the apostles first ; yet when he exhorts to the pursuit of spiritual gifts, he says nothing of apostleship. " Be zealous for spiritual gifts," he writes, " but rather that you may prophesy." ¹ Prophecy, he argues, is the greatest of the charismata, because it edifies the faithful, and convinces unbelievers. If apostleship were a charism (in the narrow sense), would it not be a greater gift than even prophecy ? The preaching of the gospel is not the free working of the Spirit ; St. Paul preaches what he himself has received,² the testimony of Christ. He governs, likewise, in virtue of the power received from the same divine Master.³ If he is assisted by the Spirit, so that his preaching is accompanied by signs and wonders, his hearers have a guarantee that his gospel is authentic ; but this does not raise the preacher above the status of an evangelist or a prophet ; it does not constitute his character apostolic. " After fourteen years," he says, " I went up to Jerusalem, and communicated to them the gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles ; but apart to those who seemed to be something, lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain." ⁴ Lest he should run in vain, he would have the recognition of the great apostles—the acknowledgment, that the gospel he preached was that which they too had received from Christ. His teaching, therefore, is not a charismatical utterance ; it is not its own justification. It is rather the testimony of Christ : " When I came to you, I came declaring the testimony of Christ." ⁵ For this was he sent ; in this he was Christ's ambassador.

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 3.

³ 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

⁴ Gal. ii. 1

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 1.

CHAPTER III.—THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

THE consideration of the apostolic authority leads us to consider the society over which the apostles ruled. All accounts agree in pointing out the mother-church of Jerusalem as the nucleus of the new society. Here we find the earliest followers of Jesus grouped around twelve men, who had been His chosen disciples. At first sight, they seem to differ little from the ordinary Jews; they go to the temple to pray, they submit to the ordinances of the law, they expound the sacred books of Israel. This was not to be wondered at. The first Christians were converted Jews; they had been accustomed to look on the Mosaic law as divinely given, to regulate every detail of their daily life; they believed that in Jerusalem they had the temple of the true God, and in it the ritual prescribed by the Lord Himself. In Jesus, however, they had found the Messiah foretold by the prophets; and this differentiated them from the rest of the Jews, who still looked forward to the fulfilment of the prophecies. With the exception of a few sacramental rites, Christ had made no provision for a new worship; they had as yet no Christian temples, and hardly any Christian ritual; everything was still to be organised. In such circumstances, it was but natural they should continue their previous mode of life, in so far as it was compatible with their new faith. There were many reasons why they should do so. They were still Jews by nationality; and in the Jewish theocracy religion and nationality were closely interwoven. To gain the sympathy of the people, and convert souls to Jesus Christ, it was necessary to avoid the reproach of impiety and apostasy, which was sure to be levelled at them, if they renounced the law. Even the Apostle of the Gentiles yields to pressure on this point, and goes through the customary purifications in the temple. He believes that the temple ritual is but a

figure of better things in Christianity ; he frequently insists that the law has been abolished ; yet, he is willing to become all things to all men, to gain all to Christ.

The Christians, nevertheless, while having many points in common with the Jews clearly form a distinct society. The apostles are persecuted from the beginning by the Jewish authorities, and forbidden to preach the new creed ; but they show the independence of their movement, by refusing to acknowledge the authority of the supreme Jewish council. Soon afterwards, St. Stephen is accused of blaspheming against the law and the temple, and is stoned to death in the traditional fashion. About the same time, Saul sets out for Damascus, with authority to persecute all those " who are of this way." Though great latitude was allowed the Jews in the matter of belief, Christianity must have been regarded by the Jewish authorities, as an apostasy from the law. This was practically the charge brought against Stephen ; it was likewise the basis of the persecution, which followed his martyrdom. The Christians, moreover, formed a distinct community ; and a well-defined community it was : " Those that believed lived together, and had all things in common . . . and they were persevering in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles." ¹ When the faithful met in the porch of Solomon, no one durst join them ; but, as the faith spread among the Jews, thousands were sometimes " added " ² on a single occasion. To what were they added ? Doubtless to the visible society, which had all things in common, and which was persevering in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. Men were admitted to this society by a rite of initiation called baptism ; they had their specifically Christian meetings, with a symbol of brotherhood, the Eucharist ; they were united by the same doctrine and the same " fellowship of the apostles " ; and they worked for the same spiritual end ; " The multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul." ³ At first the multitude worked amicably together, under the authority of the twelve alone ; but, as the society grew in dimensions, the apostles were unable to attend to

¹ Acts. ii. 44. 42.

² Acts ii. 41.

³ Acts iv. 32.

everything, and a complaint arose amongst a certain section of the community, and became the occasion of the first development. The apostles gave instructions that seven men be selected, "whom we may appoint over this business"; the selection was made by the multitude, and the apostles installed the candidates in office by the imposition of hands. A few years later, we shall find in the hierarchy of this same community a third order, which will be associated with the apostles, in "laying no further burden on you than these necessary things."¹

When the gospel spreads beyond the limits of Palestine, we find similar communities established by St. Paul in the Greek cities of the Empire. At Corinth, for instance, the Christian settlement is a well-defined entity, easily distinguishable from Jews and Gentiles alike.² If its members have a dispute among themselves, they are instructed to settle their differences without appeal to the pagan tribunals.³ If a member is a source of scandal to the brethren, he must be expelled from the society, at least for a while.⁴ Here, again, we find the same rite of initiation, baptism: "For, in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free." The community has also a weekly meeting,⁵ where, as at Jerusalem, the members have a Christian repast, the Eucharist, the symbol of their brotherhood. By the eating of this repast, the faithful are shown to be one body, a mystical body of Christ.⁶ In this body, however, there may be sinful schisms; for the individual Christians are not perfect.⁷ St. Paul distinguishes carefully between the Christian society and the pagan society, by which it is surrounded. If he exercises judicial power over the former,⁸ he claims no such power over the latter.⁹ There must be no fellowship between the two societies; "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship has righteousness with iniquity? Or what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with

¹ Acts xv.⁴ *ib.* v.⁷ *ib.* i. 11, 12.² 1 Cor. x. 32.⁵ *ib.* xvi. 2.⁸ 1 *ib.* v. 3.³ *ib.* vi.⁶ *ib.* x. 17.⁹ *ib.* v. 12.

Belial? And what agreement has a temple of God with idols? For we are a temple of the living God." Here, as elsewhere St. Paul shows the greatness of the Christian vocation. The Christian community is a temple of God, but a temple that can be corrupted; ¹ it is the body of Christ, but a body where schism is possible; a chosen people, the true Israel, but a race in which there are unworthy individuals. The Pauline church is not merely a Christian club, composed of all those who are more or less conscientiously striving after these high ideals. It is rather a society in the strict sense, that is, a number of people united under authority, in the pursuit of a common end. We have already seen what authority St. Paul exercised over the Christian communities. It was not always a matter of instruction or counsel, between the apostle and his spiritual children; he frequently claimed strict obedience to his precepts.² One may judge of his authority from the reception, which even Titus, his legate, receives from the Corinthian church: "Remembering the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him."³ But there is evidence of a local authority also, even in St Paul's earliest epistles. To the Thessalonians he writes: "We beseech you, brethren, to know those, who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord." To the Corinthians: "I beseech you, brethren,—you know the house of Stephanus, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have given themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you be subject to such, and to everyone that helps in the work, and labours."⁴ These words clearly imply a local authority of some kind. They suggest, moreover, the testimony of Clement, who says that the apostles selected the first-fruits of their missions, and made them "bishops and deacons over such as should afterwards believe."⁵ We need not, however, go so far as Clement for this testimony; we have it in the *Acts*⁶ and in the epistles of St. Paul himself.⁷

Dr. Hatch sees in the Christian communities merely an

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 17.

² 2 Cor. ii. 9.

³ *ib.* vii. 15.

⁴ 1 Cor. xvi. 15-16.

⁵ Clement 42.

⁶ Acts xiv. 22; xx. 28.

⁷ Phil. i. 1.

imitation of the pagan *collegia*: "There was a general tendency in the early centuries of the Christian era towards the formation of societies, and especially of religious societies. It was natural that the early converts to Christianity should combine together. . . . There were many points in which those Christian communities resembled contemporary associations. . . . What *qua* associations was their point of difference? The answer will be found in a consideration of the circumstances of the times; they were times of great social strain . . . the pressure of poverty was severe. Societies like the Christian societies . . . were thus at once differentiated by the element of philanthropy." ¹ The analogies quoted by Hatch, however, do not go very far; they will never suffice to prove, either that the Christian communities were modelled on the pagan *collegia*, or that they were merely eleemosynary institutions. Charity, indeed, was a great virtue in the early Church, and it frequently found expression in hospitality and almsgiving. Wherever a Christian travelled, he was sure to find love, hospitality and assistance among the brethren. St. Paul frequently commends this laudable custom.² The virtue of almsgiving was equally inculcated. We find a complete organisation for outdoor relief in many of the churches; contributions are made by the wealthy Gentile churches for the relief of the brethren in Jerusalem; the Philippians appear to have set apart a special account, to meet the missionary expenses of St. Paul. In all this, however, there was nothing new. Hospitality had come down to the Christians by tradition; for a Jew was always sure to find a welcome in a foreign synagogue. In the same way, almsgiving was derived from Judaism. We have no stronger eulogy of this virtue in Christian literature, than we have in the book of Tobias: "For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sin, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting."³

If philanthropy was not the *raison d'être* of the local

¹ *Organization of Early Christian Churches*, p. 12.

² Rom. xvi. 2.

³ Tobias xii. 9.

synagogue, neither was it such for the local church. The Christians did not become brethren by loving and helping one another, but they loved and helped one another because they were brethren ; in other words the common faith was the basis of association : " The multitude were persevering in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles." ¹ They were Christians, because Jesus Christ had called them to Himself ; and from this followed the fellowship (*κοινωνία*), which existed between them. The word is again used by St. Paul in the epistle to the Galatians : " When they perceived the grace, that was given to me, Peter and James and John gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of friendship (*κοινωνία*), that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised." There is question, not of the union of funds, but of a union of heart and soul, based on a common faith and on a common calling. St. Paul never even insinuates that philanthropy is the principle of association. The Christians are banded together for quite other reasons : " I praise ye not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For, first of all, I hear that there are divisions among you. . . . When, therefore, ye come together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper ; for in your eating, each one takes beforehand his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunk. Have you not houses in which to eat ? Or do you despise the Church of God ? He that eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. . . . If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that your coming together be not unto judgment." ² The Christian assembly is, therefore, a religious meeting, the first and chief object of which is the celebration of the Eucharist. When the Eucharist is received unworthily, the meeting fails in its object ; they " come together not for the better but for the worse."

When St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to unity, it is because " there is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." The local communities are religious societies, founded on a common faith, a common hope,

¹ Acts ii.² 1 Cor. xi.

and a common calling ; they have a social life peculiar to themselves. They come together for the Eucharist, instruction, prayer, the reading of Scripture, and the exercise of spiritual gifts. This social life, and not the philanthropic idea, differentiates the Christian societies from the pagan associations.

The Christian community differed widely in its constitution from the pagan *collegium*. The latter was an autonomous, isolated association, usually formed under the protection of a tutelary deity. Its officers were elected annually, and derived their authority from the body which elected them. It had its temple, its idol, its worship, its object, all in keeping with the depraved notions of the times. The Christian community was quite different. In the first place, the local church embraced all the faithful of a city, however numerous they might be. In this the Christians differed both from the Jews and pagans, who seem to have formed new associations when the number of associates made the change desirable. The Christian communities were also closely connected with one another. They were not isolated societies, like the funeral clubs spoken of by Hatch ; but formed together one organised body. Their officers were ordained by the apostles, derived their power through the apostles from Christ, and held their office for life. Their faith, their morals, their worship and purpose were utter strangers to the pagan associations. The horror of Christians for everything pagan was a sufficient bulwark against the infiltration of pagan ideas in these respects. Nor had they any reason to turn to paganism for a type of organisation. In the beginning, most of them were converts from Judaism ; and if they needed a model, they would naturally turn to the synagogue, where they might find a well-developed system of local communities.

It is worthy of note that the Christians, from the very beginning, had a special name for their community. They always called it a church (*ἐκκλησία*). Even in Judea, the word "synagogue" is avoided, in spite of the fact that, by a qualifying expression, the Christian could have been easily

distinguished from the Jewish assembly. This fact alone gives a strong presumption that a new institution had arisen independent of Judaism. What, then, did the early Christians mean by a church? The word was well known, in a secular sense, in all the Greek cities, where it meant the assembly of the citizens. It is used in a similar sense in the Old Testament: "And all the chiefs of the people, and all the tribes of Israel met together in the assembly (*ἐκκλησία*) of the people of God."¹ It is in a like sense we find it used for the first time in the *Acts*. When Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, and carried out, "great fear came on the whole church";² i.e., on the assembly of the faithful at Jerusalem. The word is well known to St. Paul in these two senses. Its primary signification is preserved in such passages as the following: "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies, edifies the church of God"; "Let the women be silent in the assemblies (*ἐκκλησίαις*), for it is not permitted to them to speak"³; "If the whole church come together into one place, and all speak tongues, and if unbelievers come in, will they not say you are mad?"⁴ St. Paul, however, uses the term more frequently in the derivative sense, meaning all the Christians of a local community. He applies the word occasionally to all the Christians of a household: "Salute Prisca and Aquila . . . with the church which is in their house."⁵

This, however, is not a frequent use; the ecclesiastical unit in the Pauline epistles is the church of a city. Hence we read: "Paul . . . to the church of the Thessalonians"; "Paul . . . to the church that is at Corinth, and to all the saints, that are in all Achaia." The apostle never speaks of the churches of a city, even though it contain several such Christian households as we have just referred to. We never hear of the "churches" of Corinth or of Thessalonica, or of Philippi, or of Rome. We have, on the other hand, frequent mention of the churches of a province, because each town in the province has its own church. St. Paul speaks of the "churches

¹ Judges xx. 2.² Acts viii. 1.³ 1 Cor. xiv. 34.⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 23.⁵ Rom. xvi. 3.

of Galatia,"¹ the "churches of Asia,"² the "churches of Macedonia,"³ the "churches of the Gentiles,"⁴ and "all the churches of Christ."⁵ For Paul, therefore, the local church is a "church of God," and a "church of Christ." The local completeness of these city-communities is shown not only by the way in which St. Paul speaks of the *church* of a city and the *churches* of a province, but also by the demand for local unity. Each local church is a unity, a body of Christ, a spiritual Israel, like the Israel of the flesh.⁶ The apostle recognises the danger of schism,⁷ and he constantly combats it: "It has been signified to me . . . that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each of you says I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?"⁸ It is because the city church is a well-defined and self-contained unit, that St. Paul can urge it to have recourse to excommunication, as a punishment for scandal. It is, likewise, through this community that the pastoral charge is exercised; it is not for the Christians of a household or of a province, but for those of a city, that pastors are appointed. Hence, St. Paul writes "to all the saints who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons"; he calls to Miletus the elders of the church of Ephesus; he sends Titus to establish elders in all the cities of Crete. The local flock is the city community; its pastors are not merely individuals endowed with extraordinary charismata, and serving an indefinite number of Christians, but a corporate body (*πρεσβυτέριον*), presiding over a legal unit.

Every such community has within it a local jurisdiction. This is shown, not only by all the passages which deal with the pastoral charge, but also by the reference to excommunication in the gospel of St. Matthew,⁹ and by the application

¹ Gal. i. 22.² 1 Cor. xvi. 19.³ 2 Cor. viii. 2.⁴ Rom. xvi. 4.⁵ Rom. xvi. 16.⁶ 1 Cor. x. 17-18.⁷ *ib.* xii.⁸ *ib.* i. 11-13.

⁹ Matt. xviii. 15-18. The scheme here devised, to secure the redress of an injury, would be altogether impracticable, if there were question only of the universal church. The progression from a protest in private to a protest before two or three witnesses, and then to a protest before

of this same punishment in the church of Corinth. The apostle finds fault with the Corinthian church for not having taken action sooner ; and he commands it to excommunicate at once the incestuous member. This same local jurisdiction finds expression in the action of the elders of Jerusalem, who sit and vote with the apostles in the first Christian council. The fact that the elders are associated with the apostles in issuing the decrees shows, I think, that they are not merely apostolic delegates, but hold in their own name a magisterial and legislative authority. This principle of local jurisdiction throws some light on a peculiar expression in St. Paul's discourse at Miletus. St. Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabas established elders in the churches which they founded ; Clement of Rome confirms his testimony ; and yet, when St. Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus, he does not say : " Attend to the flock, over which *I* have placed you " ; but : " Attend to the flock, over which the *Holy Ghost* has placed you." The elders are not merely delegates of the apostles ; they hold their authority directly from God. St. Paul founded the community, and placed it on a working basis ; God himself then supplied the necessary authority. The words of Clement are also worthy of note in this connection. The apostles, he tells us, appointed everywhere the first-fruits of their labours, to be overseers and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. The apostles set up the machinery, so to speak ; subsequent converts will come under the local authority automatically. This jurisdiction, which resides permanently in the local church, is called ordinary (as distinct from delegated). It is the basis of the diocesan jurisdiction, which looms so largely in canon law ; for, the city communities of apostolic times were the dioceses of the period.

Over and above this local unity, there is a universal unity, a church composed of all the churches, something like an empire composed of many principalities. This universal

the whole church, is sufficient indication that there is question of a local community. The injunction—" Let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican "—must imply, in view of the whole passage, that the culprit is to be excluded, not only from the fellowship of the injured party, but also from that of the whole community.

Church is not the sum total of all those who are just before God, as Luther considered the Church to be. For St. Paul, the same faithful, who form the local visible churches, form also, when considered in their ensemble, the universal visible Church. The basis of this catholic unity is the universal baptism, the universal faith in Jesus, and the universal mission and authority of the apostles: "Ye are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For, as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Gentile, bond or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."¹ And again: "He gave some (to be) apostles; some prophets; some evangelists; some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."²

It is this universal Church that St. Paul contemplates, when he says: "You have heard of my conversation in time past in the religion of the Jews, how I persecuted beyond measure the Church of God, and wasted it."³ It is not merely to the church of Jerusalem, or to that of Damascus, that he refers, but rather to the whole body of Christ's disciples. We may recall the words of St. Luke's narrative: "But Saul, breathing forth threats and slaughter against the *disciples of the Lord*, went to the high-priest, and asked from him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."⁴ The apostle also tells us "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. . . . Unto me was given the grace, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages was hidden in God, to the intent that now . . . might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God."⁵ Here, without doubt, the Church is universal; but it is also visible. The Gentiles are partakers with the Jews in the

¹ Gal. iii. 29.² Eph. iv. 11-12.³ Gal. i. 13.⁴ Acts iv. 12.⁵ Eph. iii.

promise ; they are brought into the Church by the preaching of Paul ; through the Church, now composed of Jew and Gentile alike, the eternal wisdom of God, and the dispensation of the mystery hitherto hidden (*i.e.*, God's purpose to grant a universal salvation) are now manifested. If the Church is not the visible society, into which St. Paul introduces the Gentiles, how can his preaching make men see the dispensation of the mystery ? And how can the Church manifest the wisdom of God ? The Gentiles are here said to be " fellow-members " of the body. As the members of the local church are members of one body, so are all the faithful members of a universal body. The same idea is presented in a different metaphor in the *Epistle to the Romans* ; the Gentiles are branches broken from a wild species, and grafted into the olive tree ; and all become partakers of the sap of the same root.

Again, St. Paul says : " He put all things in subjection under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things, to the Church, which is His body."¹ The universal Church is not a number of bodies of Christ, but one body only ; for Christ, as the apostle tells us, is not divided.² For the same reason, schism is unlawful ; all Christians are, or ought to be, one body, and members of one another.³ The Church is again represented as the true people of God, the spiritual seed of Abraham : " Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but to be a new creature. Whoever shall follow this rule, peace and mercy on them, and on the Israel of God."⁴ This new Israel is not perfect in this world,—there are unworthy individuals,—but a perfect ideal is set before it : " He gave some (to be) apostles ; some prophets . . . for the perfecting of the saints . . . unto the building up of the body of Christ . . . that we be no longer children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness after the wiles of error ; but that, speaking the truth in charity, we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ."⁵

It is through this society that men must seek the kingdom

¹ Eph. i. 22.

² 1 Cor. i.

³ Rom. xii. 5.

⁴ Gal. vi. 16.

⁵ Eph. iv.

of heaven. When St. Peter preaches his first sermon to the Jews, they say to him : " What shall we do ? " The apostle exhorts them to repent and be baptized ; and St. Luke tells us that " those, who received his word, were baptized, and there were added in that day three thousand souls.¹ . . . And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."² St. John teaches the same doctrine : " That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us ; and our fellowship is with the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ."³ To obtain fellowship with God, one must first obtain fellowship with the apostles ; one must become a member of the Church ; just as " those who were being saved " at Jerusalem were added by the Lord to the society, " which was persevering in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles."

The same theory runs through the Pauline epistles. For the Apostle of the Gentiles, baptism has two significations. In the first place, it is the source of sanctification. By this means Christ sanctified His Church, " having cleansed it by the laver of water with the word, that he might present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle."⁴ By this means also, man is made to " taste of the Spirit" ; ⁵ " neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, avails anything ; but to become a new creature."⁶ It is by baptism that one dies to the world, and rises a new creature. In all this, we see a close resemblance to the words of our Lord : " Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." But baptism has another signification ; it is the rite of initiation into the visible Church. When St. Paul hears that there are schisms at Corinth, he asks the unruly parties : " Is Christ divided ? Were you baptised into the name of Paul ? " There ought, he contends, to be no schism ; for all have received the same baptism, whereby they have been made members of one and the same society—the mystical body of the undivided Christ. Each of the faithful is a member of that body ;

¹ Acts ii. 41.⁴ Eph. v. 27.² *ib.* ii. 47.⁵ 1 Cor. xii. 13.³ John i. 3.⁶ Gal. vi. 15.

some are prophets, others teachers, others evangelists : " If the ear shall say : because I am not the eye, therefore I am not of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ? If the whole body were the eye, where would be the hearing ? . . . Now you are the body of Christ and members of member." ¹ As all must receive baptism, all must be incorporated in the body of Christ also. This body is not, in St. Paul's theology, an invisible church of the just, but a visible society, having different classes of visible members, such as prophets, teachers, and evangelists ; it is a society, in which there can be visible schism, visible disputes and visible scandal.

St. Paul never expressly treats of the relation between the particular and the universal Church. It is even sometimes difficult to determine which church he has in view. When he says : " Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles and to the church of God," his exhortation suits either the church of Corinth or the universal Church. The predicate of one is also, frequently, the predicate of the other. The local church is the body of Christ ; the universal Church is also the body of Christ ; the local church is the church of God, the universal Church is also the church of God. Schism against the local church is also schism against the universal Church ; for, by schism one rends the body of Christ, and dishonours his baptism : " Is Christ divided ? Were you baptized into the name of Paul ? " This implies that a member of the local church, is *ipso facto* a member of the universal Church ; one obtains membership in both, by one and the same act.

An example will illustrate the theory. By becoming a subject of the Dominion of Canada, one becomes thereby a subject of the British Empire. He obtains, at once, a wider and a narrower citizenship. He obtains, no doubt, a special interest in the Canadian Dominion, but he acknowledges, with citizens of other dominions, a common authority which guides all its subjects in the pursuit of a common end ; all are united under one flag, which is the symbol of their unity. The Church is also an empire ; and the communities at Corinth,

¹ 1 Cor. xii.

Philippi and elsewhere, are its component dominions. Each community is, to a certain extent, self-governed; yet, all acknowledge a common flag. The apostolic authority extends to all parts of Christendom; the Christian faith is the common flag; the baptismal rite is the certificate of citizenship. As the worldly empire has many dominions, and yet is but one; so in Christianity there are many churches, and yet only one. The Corinthian Christians are organised in a local unit, which is the body of Christ; they are also members of a larger unit, which is, so to speak, a common and larger body of Christ. To be a citizen of the wider unit, one must, in ordinary circumstances, be a citizen of the narrower also. Hence, when a man is excommunicated for heresy or immorality, he loses the citizenship, not only of the local church, but of the universal Church also; he is, in the language of St. Paul, "delivered over to Satan." One can conceive a case where a man might be converted and baptized in the midst of pagan surroundings, far removed from any Christian community. In such a case, he is baptized into the body of Christ (*i.e.*, the universal body), but he is forced by circumstances to live as an isolated Christian. He does not, however, lose his social standing in the Church; when circumstances permit, he will be bound to take up his social duties—such as the reception of the Eucharist—which can only be fulfilled in a local assembly. Again, the emperor, in the worldly empire, need not be a citizen of any particular dominion; for his attention is equally given to all parts of the empire. So it is with the apostles. They are not bound to any particular community; their solicitude, as St. Paul says, is for all the churches. Outside these exceptional cases, membership of the universal Church goes hand in hand with membership in a local community. Hence, the local church is not merely the assembly of the "saints" in a particular place; it is itself a "church of God." We have, therefore, "the church of God which is at Corinth"; and again, "the churches of God," and "all the churches of Christ."

Dr. Hatch¹ is quite mistaken, when he says that association

¹ Op. cit. P. 29 seq.

among those who believed, was a matter of free choice in the primitive Church. "There were many who stood apart," he says, and led an isolated Christian life, never joining any Christian community: "Such an aggregation does not appear to have invariably followed belief." In the beginning, "association had to be preached, if not as an article of Christian faith, at least as an element of Christian practice." These exhortations prove that association was not at first a primary duty; for, "after the sub-apostolic age, these exhortations cease; the tendency to association had become a fixed habit." Dr. Hatch, however, is in conflict on this point with the apostolic teaching, which we have just been considering. St. Paul is never tired of insisting that Christians form a body of Christ—a visible body, as we have already shown. By the same rite, by which one is sanctified, one also becomes a member of this society—one is baptized into the body of Christ. This visible body has its various members, prophets, teachers, wonder-workers, simple faithful; all are members of the body and of one another. All this is meaningless in Dr. Hatch's view. If association is not a primary duty of the Christian life, then we are not baptised into the visible mystical body of Christ; and it is mere idealism on St. Paul's part to think that we are. If Christians become members of one body at all, they owe it, not to their baptism, but to the "tendency to association," which characterised the Roman Empire of the time.

On Dr. Hatch's theory, the Christian society as a "*tertium genus*" must also go by the board. St. Peter, addressing the Christians, "who are sojourners of the dispersion," says: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession . . . who formerly were not a people, but now are the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained it. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain from carnal desires, which war against the soul, having your conversation good amongst the Gentiles."¹ Here we again meet the "Israel of God," a visible race, as is evident from the last sentence

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9 seq.

of the quotation. Now, if the Christian faith implied no church, as Dr. Hatch maintains, what can be the meaning of the eloquence of St. Peter? What can the apostle mean when he says: "Who formerly were not a people, but now are a people of God"? It is plain, I think, that he contemplated one chosen race replacing another. The people of the first Israel were bound together in the flesh; those of the second are bound by spiritual bonds under ecclesiastical authority. Hence, the apostle goes on to say in the same epistle: "I exhort the elders . . . tend the flock which is among you, exercising the oversight (ἐπισκοποῦντες), not of constraint but willingly . . . neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but examples to the flock."¹ I do not think St. Peter meant to say: "In case you choose to form associations, let the elders be examples to their flock."

St. Jude, as Dr. Hatch remarks, speaks in his epistle of those "who separate themselves." But does he not see in them the antichrists foretold by our Lord? And does he not condemn their schism, as he condemns the sins of the flesh? St. Jude knows no saintly individualist Christians, such as Hatch contemplates. Those who separate themselves are "sensual men, *having not the Spirit*." The same remarks apply to the quotation from the Hebrews (x. 25). Here, however, the fault seems to be, not a refusal to belong to a community or association, but rather neglect to attend its meetings: "Let us consider one another, unto the exciting of charity and good works, not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together (ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν), as some are accustomed to do, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment."

If Dr. Hatch could bring forward a scriptural passage approving of individualistic Christianity, he would have made a point worth considering; but the very passages which he quotes refute his thesis. He might with equal reason quote

¹ 1 Pet. v.

the schisms at Corinth, to prove that unity was not required in the local churches ; or the intrigues of the Judaising party, to prove that Christianity was but a new phase of the Mosaic Law ; or the condemnation of carnal sins, to prove that the gospel freed men from the moral law. We are not prepared to accept as principles whatever was thought or done by individual Christians in the early Church ; men were not impeccable in the first century, any more than in the twentieth ; and if the apostles felt called on to condemn separatism, as they condemned schism and legalism, I see no reason for deducing therefrom a theory, which otherwise contradicts the evidence. The apostolic epistles prove conclusively that all Christians were united in one visible body, called the Church. Each Christian was also a member, except in abnormal cases, of some local community, some local realisation of this same body of Christ. This local organisation was not a matter of expediency, as Dr. Hatch would have us believe ; it was itself a church of God and a church of Christ ; a church, from which one could not secede without rending the body of Christ, and dishonouring baptism. It is a church to which the ordinary faithful must belong ; for expulsion from it implies separation from the body of Christ, and deliverance to Satan, the enemy of our salvation.

Professor Sohm¹ has, in recent times, revived the Lutheran theory of an invisible Church. The primitive Christians, he says, knew only one church, a purely religious and spiritual entity. There was no visible organisation, no Christian corporation, no ecclesiastical law. The Church was, indeed, the people of God, and the body of Christ ; but it had its citizenship only in heaven. The word " church " was also applied to any assembly of the faithful ; but it would be a mistake to conclude to the existence of legally organised communities. The local assembly is merely the people of God, manifested in a certain place ; and this is true, whether

¹ In summarising Sohm's theory, I follow the epitome given by Harnack in his *Constitution and Law of the Church in the first two centuries*. Harnack quotes, not from Sohm's best known work *Kirchenrecht*, but from a recent essay, *Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus*.

the assembly includes merely the Christians of a household, or the faithful of a city, or all the faithful throughout the world. Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, there also is the Church; and this is realised wherever two or three are gathered together in His name. Legal organisation, in the form of a society, is excluded; for an invisible body is incapable of being subjected to ecclesiastical law. At an early date, however, ecclesiastical authority was introduced, in connection with the Eucharistic liturgy; visible organisation began with authority; and finally, the visible community of Christians was identified with the Church, owing to a confusion of the legal with the spiritual. The *Epistle of Clement* marks the crisis; here we meet for the first time the divine right of the hierarchy; here we have the origin of the Catholic Church. It was unnecessary to wait for Luther, to recover the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church.

In representing the Church as an invisible entity, without organisation or authority, Sohm destroys the very notion of the Church; he makes it a spirit without a body. To quote Professor Harnack¹:—"The Church can then be nothing but a mere idea, in which each Christian in his isolation believes. This idea may be efficacious and powerful, but there is no church here, only a number of predestined believers, who cannot be anything to one another, and who resemble a number of parallel lines, which meet in infinity, but not before." The Church preached by the apostles, implies, as we have seen, a social unit. It has various classes of visible members, and these are members, not only of the Church, but of one another. Professor Sohm makes no provision for this social union; he cannot explain the relation that exists between the apostles and the multitude, nor the relation between the various members of the multitude itself. He admits that St. Paul and the other Christian writers of the first century make no distinction between the outwardly visible body of Christians and the people of God: but this was due to "the unreflective and undeveloped nature of the earliest Christianity." He might have gone further, and said

¹ Op. cit. P. 211 (Eng. trans.).

that they never even contemplated an invisible Church. When St. Paul cuts a man off from the visible society, he thereby severs his fellowship with Christ, and delivers him over to the power of Satan. Such a fact is impossible in Sohm's theory; for, in the first place, excommunication from the visible society does not at all affect membership of the invisible Church; and secondly, no man has authority to put another outside Sohm's Church of Christ.

If the confusion of the visible and the invisible Church is so complete in St. Paul's epistles, we fail to see how Clement's epistle could have wrought the change, which Sohm attributes to it. In his endeavour to clear up this confusion in the apostolic epistles, Sohm goes back to Christ's own teaching: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in midst of them."¹ On these words he bases his rejection of the Catholic conception, which makes the Church a visible society of all the faithful. But these very words are a sufficient refutation of his own thesis. It is evident that there is question in this passage of visible association; and the promise given by Christ as clearly implies that the perfection of Christianity is not realised, till such associations are formed. These words, as Harnack remarks, "by promising the presence of Christ to the society of even two or three believers, is a summons to form such societies"; for Sohm himself maintains that it is the presence of Christ that makes the "body of Christ" a church. It is for this reason that the apostles organised the Christians of each city into a local community; and it is the same consideration, which induces St. Paul to speak of "the church of God, which is at Corinth," and of "the churches of God," and "the churches of Christ." The apostle, therefore, gives a much more consistent interpretation of Christ's teaching, than that of the Protestant Professor. For both Christ and the apostles, the Church includes, not only the predestined, but also sinners who will never attain to final bliss. This fact alone is sufficient indication, that the Church of Christ is not an invisible entity, composed of the predestined. But, when

¹ Matt. xviii. 20.

we find our Lord appointing spiritual chiefs in His Church, and when we find the apostles acting up to the commission they have received, preaching a visible society, and exercising their authority over the faithful ; we feel that it is not Christ, but Luther, that Sohm is following. The "confusion" of the Pauline epistles exists only in the Professor's imagination ; St. Paul and the rest of the apostles are consistent in preaching, as we have seen, a visible Church of Christ ; they are equally consistent in saying nothing at all about an invisible Church. The supposed confusion begins, only when Sohm's, theory is imported into the sources.

CHAPTER IV.—THE ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΙ OR ELDERS.

THE word *πρεσβύτερος*, which is an adjective in the comparative degree, means "elder"; hence the derivative meaning "honourable." The word is frequently used in the plural, to denote a body, the elders of the people, those who are honourable by age or position. In many places the government was originally in the hands of a council composed of the heads of families. Traces of this primitive system survived in the Senate at Rome, in the Gerousia at Sparta, in the Sanhedrim of the Jews. Elders were well known, therefore, both among the Jews and Gentiles. Their functions were not everywhere the same, but there was a general resemblance. The municipalities of the Roman Empire were, for the most part, organised on the same plan as the imperial city; each had its senate or council of elders, who held a position somewhat like that of the aldermen of a modern urban corporation. The "elders of the people" mentioned in the gospel were not merely the old men, the heads of families and illustrious citizens, but a special class which formed, with the chief priests and scribes, the Great Sanhedrim of Jerusalem. Elders were also known in the Jewish municipalities. The confusion of civil and religious authority among the Jews gave these elders a rather extensive jurisdiction. They exercised not only the functions of an urban corporation, but also those of a local petty-sessions court. To these functions we might add the supervision of the goods required for public worship. The religious service, however, did not come directly under their control; this function belonged to the ruler of the synagogue.

The ubiquity of this senatorial method of communal government, both among the Jews and the Gentiles, made it antecedently probable that the first Christian communities would be organised on the same plan. When the apostles found a suitable model at hand, a model to which Christian

converts were accustomed in secular affairs, it was natural that they should apply it, with the necessary limitations, to the Christian societies. This, in fact, is what appears to have actually taken place. Having proceeded as far as Derbe on their first apostolic journey, Paul and Barnabas returned through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, where they had already preached the gospel. St. Luke tells us that on their return journey "they confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the faith . . . and when they had ordained for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."¹ The presence of elders in other Pauline churches shows that the apostle followed the same plan in his subsequent missions. Elders appear at Jerusalem about the time of the dispersion of the apostles. Their existence in the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Asia, Cappadocia and Bithynia is guaranteed by St. Peter.² St. James speaks for the Jewish communities of the dispersion;³ and Titus is instructed to ordain elders in all the cities of Crete.⁴ The letters of Clement, Polycarp and Ignatius confirm these testimonies; so that there can be no doubt that the presbyteral college was a universal institution before the close of the apostolic period.

During the reign of Claudius, when a famine overtook Judea, the Christians of Antioch determined to help their brethren in distress. Alms were collected, and Paul and Barnabas were sent to carry them to the elders at Jerusalem.⁵ Here St. Luke introduces us for the first time to the Christian elders. He tells us nothing of their appointment, nor of their position in the community. One might have expected some light from St. Luke on these points; but, as his work was written for a contemporary reader, and as the elders were a universal institution when he wrote, he evidently saw no necessity for dwelling on these matters.⁶ The events narrated,

¹ Acts xiv. 20-22.

² 1 Pet. i. 1; v. 1.

³ James v.

⁴ Tit. i. 5.

⁵ Acts xi. 28-30.

⁶ His mention of the ordination of "the seven" is probably to be accounted for by the fact that this event was occasioned by a dispute among the brethren, and furthermore because it was the first development of the hierarchy.

however, show that the elders were superiors of some kind in the church. Formerly, the money devoted to the support of the community was laid at the feet of the apostles ; now it is given into the hands of the elders. To them, apparently, is entrusted the administration of the common funds. This, however, does not carry us very far.

The events, which centre around the council of Jerusalem, throw some further light on the elders. Some Judaizing brethren, who came down from Jerusalem, created a sensation at Antioch, by proclaiming that salvation could not be obtained without circumcision. Considerable discussion followed this announcement ; and representatives of both parties were sent "to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, about this question." When the messengers arrived, "the apostles and elders assembled, to examine the matter." The council was held in the presence of all the faithful ; but it is clear that the apostles and elders alone were judges in the matter. It was to the apostles and elders that the representatives were sent ; it was the apostles and elders who assembled to discuss the question. St. Luke does not tell us whether any of the elders spoke on this occasion ; he records only the speeches of Peter, Paul, Barnabas and James. This does not imply, however, that the elders took no part in the deliberations ; for no speech is recorded on the part of St. John, though he was certainly present. After due deliberation, "it seemed good to the apostles and elders, with the whole church," to elect representatives to convey the decision to Antioch. These words do not imply, as certain writers suppose, that the ordinary faithful had an equal voice with the apostles and elders in the theological discussion. If the teaching authority rested, in the last resort, with the assembly, the church of Antioch would never have referred the question to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. With the help of their prophets and teachers, the assembly at Antioch must have been quite as capable to settle the question, as the assembly at Jerusalem. Yet, Dr. Lindsay tells us that the authority was democratic in the Christian communities ; and he assures us, moreover,

that the particular church of Antioch came into being, without the knowledge or assistance of the apostles.¹ It is not easy to explain, on such hypotheses, the appeal of the church of Antioch, and the authoritative tone of the council of Jerusalem. The facts of the case are much better explained, without any reference to democratic authority. The laity were allowed great latitude in the matter of elections in the early Church. The seven were elected by popular vote at Jerusalem, though ordination was reserved to the apostles. The bishops were similarly elected as late as the third century. We might say, in general, that the assembly usually had a voice in all matters of prudence and consultation. But it was not so in the dogmatic question before us. According to the best reading, the decree was sent out in the name of the apostles and elders: "The apostles and elder brethren to the brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia."² When St. Paul, later on, promulgated these decrees in the churches of Asia Minor, he attributed them only to the apostles and elders: "He delivered to them to keep the decrees which were decreed by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem."³ These testimonies are confirmed by the words of the elders themselves. During a subsequent visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem, we find the elders assembled in council with James. They remark to St. Paul: "As to those of the Gentiles who believe, we have sent to them decreeing that they abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication."⁴ These words, which evidently refer to the council we have just been considering, show clearly that the speakers, and not the community, were the authors of the decrees. Not satisfied with the word *ἐπεστείλαμεν*, they add *ἡμεῖς*: "We have sent," with emphasis on the word "we."

Their connection with the council of Jerusalem shows that the elders held a magisterial and legislative jurisdiction. Only three of the twelve apostles appear to have been present,⁵ so that the council was not an apostolic council,

¹ Op. cit. p. 59, 60.

³ Acts xvi. 4.

² So the *Revised Version* (Acts xv. 23).

⁴ *ib.* xxi. 25.

⁵ Gal. ii. 9.

but rather a council of apostles and elders. It was such a composite assembly as the Christians of Antioch had in view, when they appealed to the "apostles and elders" at Jerusalem. This council recognised the authoritative nature of its decision: "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden on you than these things."¹ The legislators could scarcely have made clearer their claim to authority. The fact that St. Paul delivered these decrees "to be kept" in all the churches, through which he passed,² confirms our conclusion. The words used by the apostle are particularly significant. The decrees are called *δόγματα*, that is, binding resolutions, something like a *senatus consultum* at Rome. The title is strengthened by the addition of *τὰ κεκριμένα*, which implies a judicial decision.

The elders of Jerusalem come into evidence once more during St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem, just before his first captivity. On the day after his arrival, "Paul went in with us to James; and all the elders were gathered together." Having listened to St. Paul's account of the Gentile churches, they discuss with him the situation at Jerusalem. The Christians of Jerusalem, they think, are zealous for the law, and St. Paul must conform to this zeal, if he is to save his reputation: "Do therefore this that we say to thee. We have four brethren, that have a vow. Take these and sanctify thyself with them, and bestow on them, that they may shave their heads; and all will know that the things they have heard of thee are false, and that thou also walkest keeping the law."³ Here the elders appear, not in the capacity of financial administrators, nor in that of teachers and legislators, but as the fathers of the community, consulting for the peace and edification of the flock.

St. James's epistle may be taken as supplementing these sketches of the elders of Jerusalem, both because it is addressed to Jewish communities, modelled in all probability on the community of Jerusalem, and more especially because of St. James's close connection with the elders of the mother-church. In view of this connection, we must presume that,

¹ Acts xv. 28.² *ib.* xvi. 4.³ Acts xxi. 23-24.

when St. James speaks without qualification of the elders of other churches, he speaks of an institution like that over which he himself presided: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him call in the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."¹ Here we find a reference to a purely spiritual function of the elders. They pronounce over the sick man the prayer of faith; they anoint him in the name of the Lord; they are the instruments of pardon from sin. This spiritual ministry is an official function. It cannot be maintained that there is question here only of the old men of the community. Neither is there question of a charism of healing. The forgiveness of sins does not belong to a charism of bodily healing. Furthermore, it would not be necessary, in all probability, for one who had such a charism to anoint a sick man with oil. Such anointing, even if it took place, would not represent the ceremony mentioned by St. James: for it is chiefly to the prayer of faith that the effects are attributed. Lastly, this whole ceremony is reserved to the elders; whereas the charismata, as we know from St. Paul, were enjoyed by all classes of the community. The elders in question are the "elders of the church," a title which is also applied by St. Luke to the elders of Ephesus. When we compare the various data, we can conclude that the elders of Jerusalem—and the same can be said for the elders of all the Judæo-Christian churches—were a ruling order in the community. They consulted for the peace and edification of the community, they administered its financial resources, they enjoyed a magisterial jurisdiction, and they ministered at least some of the sacraments to the faithful. We are not told whether they baptized, celebrated the Eucharist, or imposed hands; but the references are so few and brief, that we can conclude absolutely nothing from silence.

The position of the elders in the Pauline churches is

¹ James v. 14-15.

incidentally sketched, in St. Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus. This discourse occurs in one of the "we" passages of the *Acts*, and is therefore of the highest historical value. The historian was an eye-witness of the events he describes; he knows that the church of Ephesus was ruled by elders; and he listened to the exhortations addressed to them by St. Paul: "Sending to Ephesus he called the elders of the church. When they came, he said to them . . . attend therefore to yourselves and to the whole flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers, to rule the church of the Lord, which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flock; and from your own number, men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that, for the space of three years, I ceased not day and night admonishing each one with tears." ¹ Here the elders are the spiritual superiors of the local church; they are shepherds, feeding, ruling and overseeing the flock. Their magisterial authority occupies the foremost place in the discourse; for the apostle foresees that some of them will be unfaithful, and will draw disciples after them in the ways of error. He, therefore, warns them to be on their guard, and to keep in mind the admonitions, which he has given during his three years' sojourn among them. To the ravenous wolves, who devour their disciples, by teaching false doctrine, he opposes the shepherd, who will feed them with the word of truth. But their ruling authority is not forgotten; for the apostle reminds them that the Holy Ghost has placed them stewards (ἐπισκόπους) in the church, to oversee the faithful. This address of St. Paul, as far as it goes, harmonises exactly with the passages relating to the elders of Jerusalem. At Jerusalem we find the elders deciding a question of faith; here they teach the gospel committed to them by St. Paul. At Jerusalem the elders consult for the peace and edification of the church, and associate themselves with the apostles in making certain

¹ Acts xx. 28-31.

disciplinary enactments ; at Ephesus we find them ruling the community, as the representatives of the Holy Ghost. This similarity of function affords a strong presumption, that the elders of the Pauline churches held the same kind of office as the elders of Jerusalem. And how could it be otherwise ? Before St. Paul commenced his great missionary journeys, he had come into contact with the elders of Jerusalem, and during a considerable ¹ sojourn there, must have learned exactly the position of these dignitaries. The fact, that the early literature implies that the presbyteral college was a universal institution, and at the same time affords no indication of a distinction of presbyterates, is sufficient evidence that the office of the elders was the same in all the churches.

The letters of St. Paul throw some further light on the presbyterate. In the first epistle to Timothy, he says : " Let the elders that rule well (*προεστῶτες*) be accounted worthy of double recompense, especially those who labour zealously in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture says : ' thou shalt not muzzle the ox, that treads out the corn ' ; and : ' the labourer is worthy of his hire.' Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except on the word of two or three witnesses. Those who sin reprove in the presence of all, that the rest may fear. . . . Be not hasty to impose hands on anyone ; neither be a party to the sins of others." ² This epistle was written to Timothy, at a time when he presided over the church of Ephesus ; the elders in question, therefore, can be no others than those, whom St. Paul had addressed at Miletus a few years before. On that occasion, the apostle referred to the elders as *ἐπίσκοποι* of the community ; here he calls them *προεστῶτες*, which conveys the same idea. At Miletus he addressed them as the representatives of the Holy Ghost ; the same idea is here implied by the imposition of hands. In the former discourse, the elders are likened to shepherds, feeding their flock with the word of truth ; here they are said to labour in the word and in teaching.

¹ Acts xi. 30 ; xii. 25.

² 1 Tim. v. 17-22.

It would be a mistake to conclude, with Dr. Hatch, that only a few of the elders preach and teach. St. Paul says nothing, to imply that these duties constituted an independent office; on the contrary, he makes it clear, as we shall see presently, that teaching was one of the chief duties of an elder. Κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ does not imply merely preaching and teaching, but doing so zealously—spending themselves in the labour. It must be apparent, from a consideration of the circumstances of the times, that all could not be equally efficient as teachers. Many must have lacked the expert knowledge, which would have induced them to be κοπιῶντες in teaching. They might be qualified to teach converts and catechumens the elementary truths of Christianity, when it would be imprudent for them to undertake the instruction of the whole community. But all the elders appear to have been teachers to some extent. In this very epistle, the capacity to teach is one of the qualifications for office: “A bishop (overseer) must therefore be . . . a teacher”;¹ where *overseer* is synonymous with *elder*. When St. Paul sends Titus to appoint elders in the cities of Crete, he instructs him to see that each candidate follows the truth, “in order that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict.”²

Dr. Hatch brings forward another objection from the *Epistle to the Ephesians*: “God has given some to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors and teachers.”³ The pastors, or shepherds, are the elders of the community, as is evident from a comparison with the passages relative to the elders. The duty of teaching belongs, therefore, to another class of superiors, who are called teachers. Dr. Hatch, however, is particularly unfortunate in his quotation, for this passage furnishes a complete refutation of his theory. The pastors and teachers represent not two classes but one, as the combination of the two words under a single τοὺς δέ in Greek clearly demonstrates. Those who are pastors are also teachers in virtue of their office.

The importance of the elders can be easily gathered from

¹ 1 Tim. iii.

² Tit. i. 9.

³ Eph. iv. 11.

St Paul's instructions to Timothy. They are worthy, he tells us, of double recompense, on account of their work. An accusation against them must not be received, except on the testimony of two or three witnesses: the defamation of an elder would evidently be a source of great scandal to the church. The greatest caution must be observed in the choice of candidates; a long catalogue of qualifications is laid down; and Timothy is exhorted to ordain no man rashly; for, as St. Paul says elsewhere, an unworthy elder is a ravenous wolf in the midst of the flock.

The office of the elders addressed by St. Peter in no way differs from that of the elders in Jerusalem, and in the Pauline churches. Writing to the communities of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, the apostle says: "I beseech the elders, I their fellow-elder . . . Shepherd the flock of God, that is among you, watching over them, not by constraint but willingly; not for the sake of filthy gain, but zealously; not as lording it over your charge, but becoming examples to the flock: and when the prince of pastors comes, you will receive an unfading crown of glory."¹ One cannot fail to remark the similarity in ideas, and even in expression, between this passage and St. Paul's address at Miletus. The elders are here, again, the pastors or shepherds of the flock; they direct and govern with authority the flock of God which is among them (*ποιμάνετε* and *ἐπισκοποῦντες*); they are the representatives of the Prince of pastors in the local community. St. Peter, it is true, does not say that the elders were consecrated by the Holy Ghost;² but he implies as much, when he says that they shall have to render an account of their charge to the Prince of pastors. The apostle also omits to mention how far the elders labour in the word and in teaching; he contents himself with a brief general exhortation to direct their charge in the way of perfection, by word and example. The apostle, most probably, includes the idea of teaching, that is, feeding the flock with the word

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1, seq.

² That is, by imposition of hands, which is the ordinary manner of conferring the Holy Ghost.

of truth, in the word *ποιμνάτε*. When St. Paul uses the same simile, in his discourse at Miletus, he opposes to the genuine pastors the ravenous wolves, "who speak perverse things, and draw disciples after them." St. Peter's own magisterial authority is strongly in evidence in this epistle; yet he calls himself the colleague (*συμπρεσβύτερος*) of the elders he addresses. There is no reason, therefore, to suppose that the office of these elders was in any way inferior to the corresponding institution in the Pauline churches; indeed, many of the communities addressed must have been themselves Pauline foundations.

We may add to the teaching of the New Testament the testimony of Clement of Rome. Clement wrote towards the end of the first century, but he testifies to a state of things, which goes back to the time of St. Paul. His letter is an apology for the elders, who had been unjustly displaced from their ministry, in a "detestable sedition, kindled by a few headstrong, self-willed persons." "It is utterly shameful," he writes, "and unworthy of your conduct in Christ, that it should be reported, that the very steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians, for the sake of one or two persons, makes sedition against its elders."¹ To accentuate the sinfulness of the schism, he emphasises the fact that the elders are constituted in authority: "Who is noble among you? Who is compassionate? Who is filled with love? Let him say: if, by reason of me, there be faction and strife and division, I retire, I depart . . . only let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly-appointed elders."² The elders are duly appointed to office, therefore. They are entitled to the obedience of the faithful: "Ye, therefore, that laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves to the elders, and receive chastisement unto repentance."³ They hold their authority by succession from the apostles; for the latter set up the first-fruits of their preaching, as overseers and deacons of those who should afterwards believe: "For this cause, therefore, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards provided a continuance, that if these

¹ Clem. i.² *ib.* 54.³ *ib.* 57.

should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those who were appointed by them, or afterwards by other men of repute . . . we consider to be unjustly thrown out from their ministration. For it will be no light sin, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the overseer's office blamelessly and holily." ¹ The elders of Corinth are evidently ecclesiastical rulers; Clement inculcates obedience and submission to them. They are successors of the apostles, and pastors of the flock, duly constituted in authority. Their work is called a ministration, though the writer does not tell us in what exactly it consists. One thing, however, appears to be certain, namely, that the elders, in view of their office, celebrated the Eucharist, or "offered the gifts."

It has been maintained by some writers, that the presbyterate was not an office, but merely a rank or honorary position, in the primitive communities. This is proved, we are told, from the antithesis of "elder" and "younger," and from the addition of a qualifying term, whenever there is question of elders who hold office. In the first epistle of St. Peter, we find the following exhortation: "Elders . . . shepherd the flock that is among you, watching over them (ἐπισκοποῦντες), not by constraint, but willingly; not for the sake of gain, but zealously. . . . And when the Prince of pastors appears, you will receive an unfading crown of glory. Similarly, younger (people) be subject to (the) elders." ² Here there is evidently question of the pastors of the flock, whose duty it is to attend to the spiritual needs of the community, and to whom the younger folk are bound to render submission. In the first part of the quotation, the word *πρεσβύτεροι* is a technical term, meaning, not *old men*, but *elders of the church*. There is no indication that the word has a different signification in the second part of the passage; on the contrary, the connection forbids us to suppose any such change; for the two sentences are bound together in the closest manner by the word *ὁμοίως*. The word *νεώτεροι* (younger) is, nevertheless, opposed to

¹ Clem. 44.

² 1 Peter v.

πρεσβύτεροι. The explanation of this antithesis is to be found, not in stripping πρεσβύτεροι of its technical meaning, but in allowing νεώτεροι a technical meaning correlative to that of πρεσβύτεροι. The whole community is divided into two classes, the rulers and the ruled. The former are called "elders," the latter "younger." The early Christians must have had terms to express the governing and the governed sections of the community. The word "elders" was taken over from Judaism, to represent the former; the word "younger" was the natural antithesis. This technical meaning of νεώτερος appears to have been known, even in our Lord's time. When Christ promises to give the apostles power in His Church, He warns them against a despotic use of this power: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have power over them are called beneficent. Be you not so; but he that is *greater* (ὁ μείζων) among you, let him be as the *younger* (ὁ νεώτερος)" ¹ Here "younger" means a subject, one who is less, as compared with him who is greater by reason of authority.²

The words "elder" and "younger" did not lose their primary significations, even after they had acquired these technical meanings. We have to examine the context, therefore, in each case, to determine the sense which the writer has in view. In the first epistle to Timothy, St. Paul deals successively with elder men, younger men, elder women, younger women, children, husbands and widows. These are all introduced without the article. Then he goes on to speak of *the elders*: "Let the elders who rule well be deemed worthy of double recompense, especially those who labour zealously in the word and in teaching. . . . Against an elder, receive not an accusation, except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Those who sin rebuke before all, that the rest may fear. . . . Be not hasty to impose hands on anyone."³ Here we have two distinct passages relating to

¹ Luk. xxii. 25-26.

² The opposition of the words "elder" and "younger" nevertheless suggests that the *elders* were all men of advanced age. Compare *Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles* (xviii. 3): "Oportet igitur presbyteros jam aetate provecos esse in mundo."

³ 1 Tim. v.

elders. In the first, there is question of the old men, as opposed to young men; just as old women are opposed to young women in the following verse. The particular privilege of an elder of this class is that he ought not to be reproved, but entreated as a father. In the second passage, the word is used in its technical sense, to signify the ecclesiastical officers of the community. An elder of this class has a two-fold privilege; he is worthy of abundant recompense, and may not be judged on the testimony of a single witness. If, however, he is convicted of sin, he is not merely entreated as a father, but reproved "before all, that the rest may fear."

It is quite untrue to say that the word "elders," when used without a qualifying term—such as ἐπισκοποῦντες, προεστῶτες or ἡγούμενοι—never signifies ecclesiastical office-bearers, but merely an order or rank of honour. In the *Epistle of Clement*, the word "elders" is frequently used without qualification, to signify the ecclesiastical superiors: "Blessed are those elders who have gone before, who had a faithful and ripe departure (from life), for they have no fear, lest anyone should remove them from their appointed position."¹ When Clement says that the "elders" are appointed, he does not insinuate that they were elders beforehand, and that their appointment consisted in their becoming overseers (ἐπίσκοποι). If such were his meaning he would have added the name of the office to which they were appointed, just as we do at present, when we say a priest is consecrated bishop, or appointed to a bishopric. Clement, on the contrary, implies that the office-bearers in question were appointed elders, and remained elders after their appointment: "Let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly appointed elders." St. Luke relates, in the same manner, that Paul and Barnabas established elders in the churches of Asia Minor. If the appointment consisted in taking elders and making them overseers, St. Luke should have said that they established overseers as overseers; and Clement should have written: "Let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly appointed overseers."

¹ Clem. 44.

Clement is but following the usage of the New Testament documents. The elders of Jerusalem manage the finances of the community, assist at the council of Jerusalem, and consult for the peace and edification of the church; they are evidently office-bearers, yet are never given any title but the simple *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι*. St. Peter, writing to the churches of Asia Minor, addresses "the elders among you," without any qualifying epithet; yet he immediately goes on to exhort them to fulfil their pastoral duties faithfully. In the epistle of St. James, the ministers of Extreme Unction are called "the elders of the church," without further definition. Neither the apostolic nor the sub-apostolic literature furnishes any solid reason for supposing the existence of an order of elders, holding an honorary position between the old men and the office-bearers. The word *πρεσβύτεροι* has only two significations, so far as I can find—its etymological sense, in which it means old men, and its technical sense, in which it means ecclesiastical superiors.

Notwithstanding the evidence already considered, certain rationalistic scholars ¹ still question the existence or authority of the elders in the early Christian communities. They contend that St. Paul, in his earliest and greatest epistles, knows of no localised office-bearers; and they quote in support of their contention the epistles to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, and the Romans; to which for convenience we may add the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. It is not with a view to meeting these objections, that we stop to consider the epistles quoted; for the argument from silence is absolutely worthless, in face of the positive testimony we have considered. None of St. Paul's epistles were written before 50 A.D., when the elders must have been well known, and well established in the Church. But do we not find in these early letters a confirmation of the testimony already brought forward, from other epistles of St. Paul, as well as from the *Acts of the Apostles* and the letters of St. Peter, St. James, and Clement of Rome?

In the earliest of St. Paul's epistles, we find the following

¹ e.g. Réville, "Origines de l'épiscopat."

exhortation : " We beseech you, brethren, to recognise those who labour zealously among you, and who are placed over you in the Lord, and who admonish you ; and to esteem them most abundantly in charity, on account of their work." ¹ All the participles are grouped under a single *τούς*, in the Greek, a fact which shows that there is question of only one class of superiors. That these superiors are no other than the elders of Thessalonica, is clear from a comparison with the first epistle to Timothy. They are, in the first place, local office-bearers, *προϊσταμένους ὑμῖν ἐν κυρίῳ*, corresponding to the *οἱ προεστῶτες* in Ephesus. They have likewise the same functions ; they are *κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ νοουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς*, just as the elders at Ephesus are *κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλία*. They are worthy of abundant esteem and charity, on account of their work, as the elders of Ephesus are worthy of abundant honour for a similar reason. From this agreement, not only in ideas, but in expression, the unprejudiced critic can scarcely fail to realise, that the system of government, contemplated in the epistles to the Thessalonians, harmonises exactly with that portrayed in the later epistles of St. Paul, and the *Acts of the Apostles*. When we remember that St. Paul established elders, during his first apostolic journey, in all the cities which he evangelised ; and that he preached in Thessalonica soon afterwards ; and when we see that the only superiors here mentioned have the same functions as the elders of Ephesus ; we can have no reasonable doubt that the apostle speaks here of the elders of the local community. The critics tell us that St. Paul should have mentioned the word " elders " ; but it is questionable whether they would be satisfied, even if he had done so. Modern scholarship is too often hypercritical. If the apostle mentions " elders " alone, we are told that he means merely old men ; if he refutes this contention, by adding a predicate which denotes authority, the expression is seized on, to distinguish different kinds of elders : if, as in the present case, he mentions only the title of authority, exception is taken to his omission of the technical term. St. Paul is here giving

¹ 1 Thess. v. 12-13.

the Thessalonians a general exhortation to respect authority, and it is consequently quite natural to use the general expression, "your superiors," rather than the more definite "elders."

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle addresses his readers as follows: "I beseech you brethren—you know the house of Stephanus, that they are the first-fruits of Achaia, and have set themselves to the ministry for the saints—that you be subject to such, and to everyone that helps in the work, and labours zealously. I rejoice in the presence of Stephanus and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied that which was wanting to you. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore those who are such."¹ Here, without doubt, St. Paul refers to ecclesiastical superiors of some kind. The faithful are exhorted to acknowledge and be subject to not only the house of Stephanus, who have given themselves to the ministry, but also others who hold a similar position (τοῖς τοιούτοις). The mention of the first-fruits of Achaia, followed by the mention of the ministry for the saints, bears out the testimony of Clement, who says that the apostles ordained the first-fruits of their preaching overseers and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. We hope to show, in a subsequent chapter, that for Clement "elders," in the technical sense, is synonymous with "overseers." Were Stephanus, Fortunatus and "other such" (οἱ τοιοῦτοι) the elders of Corinth? Clement's letter to the same church, some forty-five years later, establishes a strong presumption. His apology for the Corinthian elders is based chiefly on an appeal to history. The apostles, he says, established elders in every church; and other approved men, in accordance with arrangements made by the apostles, filled the vacancies caused by death in the presbyteral college. The apostles selected the candidates for office from the first-fruits of their preaching. Now, if the unruly Corinthians could reply to Clement that the Church of Corinth had no elders in the time of St. Paul, his whole argument would fall to the ground.

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 15-18.

If they could even say that, in the case of Achaia, the apostles departed from their usual method of procedure, and omitted to ordain Stephanus an elder, they would strike a severe blow at Clement's first proposition. Now, many of the Corinthians must have remembered the first establishment of elders in their midst; they must, therefore, have been able to refute any false statements made in this matter. Yet, this letter of Clement was for many years ranked by them with the Scripture, and read on Sunday at their liturgical meetings.

We are not, however, dependent on external evidence. Stephanus and "such" have a right to submission: "Be subject to such." We may recall the words of Clement to the same community: "Be subject to the elders"; and the words of St. Peter: "Youngers be subject to the elders." The correlative term *προεστῶτες* is the predicate of the elders in the first epistle to Timothy. The superiors at Corinth are also *κοπιῶντες* and *συνεργοῦτες*, as the elders at Ephesus.¹ Finally, the faithful are exhorted to acknowledge Stephanus and "such," as the Thessalonians are exhorted to acknowledge their *προϊστάμενοι*. There is nothing to justify the supposition that these Corinthian superiors were merely men endowed with extraordinary charismata. On the contrary, all the evidence points to an office. The fact that they have set themselves to the ministry for the saints does not harmonise with the charismatic theory. The charismata, contemplated in this same epistle, appear to be occasional, not permanent gifts; they are given by the Spirit freely, often unexpectedly; and, when given, they appear to suspend, to a great extent, the power of deliberation. The house of Stephanus, on the other hand, have deliberately consecrated themselves to the ministry; and this fact is mentioned in such close connection with the first-fruits, that we can scarcely avoid concluding that the apostles here appointed to office, in accordance with

¹ St. Paul implies indeed that there were other "labourers" at Corinth besides the house of Stephanus. These were probably the missionaries, whose jurisdiction was not confined to any particular community. Titus was such a *συνεργός* (2 Cor. viii. 23), and he was received by the Corinthians with fear and trembling.

the custom testified to by Clement. Moreover, the chapter, which St. Paul has just devoted to the gifts, affords no reason for supposing that those endowed with charismata laid claim to any ecclesiastical authority. Stephanus and his colleagues, on the other hand, have evidently a claim to the obedience of the faithful. The fact that the apostle rejoices in their presence, because of the work they have accomplished, also tends to show that their position is official. Their presence could scarcely have been necessary on any other hypothesis, "to supply that which was wanting." In the matter of charismata the church of Corinth was so well provided, that St. Paul had to legislate to limit the use of miraculous gifts: "Let only two or three prophets speak; let the rest judge. But if another that is sitting receive a revelation, let the first be silent."¹ When St. Paul rejoices, therefore, in the presence of Stephanus and his colleagues, it cannot be because they enjoy a miraculous gift; for there was already at Corinth a superabundant supply of charismata. He rejoices, rather, because they hold an official position—a power of orders—by reason of which they have supplied that which was wanting, beyond the sphere of the charismata. When we take into account St. Paul's custom of appointing elders, his eighteen months residence at Corinth, the testimony of Clement and the internal evidence of the epistle, there can be scarcely a doubt that there were elders in Corinth, when the apostle wrote his first epistle to that church.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* also mentions ecclesiastical superiors: "Obey those who rule over you, and be subject to them—for they watch over your souls as having to render an account—that they may do this with joy, and not with sorrow";² and again: "Remember your rulers, who spoke to you the word of God, whose faith imitate, considering the end of their manner of life."³ That these were not universal, but local superiors, is clear from several considerations. In the first place, the repeated use of *ἐμὼν* points to this conclusion. If St. Paul spoke of unlocalised superiors, such as the apostles, he would most probably have used the

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 30.² Heb. xiii. 17.³ *ib.* xiii. 7.

expression οἱ ἡγούμενοι simply. Secondly, some of these superiors have died among his readers; for the faithful have seen with their eyes (ἀναθεωρεῖν) their departure from life. Others still survive, and watch over the souls of their flock, as having to render an account of them. To these the faithful are exhorted to render a ready submission, that their duty may be a source of pleasure to the "leaders." These exhortations, again, tend to show that the rulers in question are local officers, permanently resident among the faithful. Thirdly, these permanent rulers are distinguished from other superiors, who visit the community occasionally: "Pray for us (περὶ ἡμῶν). . . . And I beseech you the more to do this, that I may be restored to you sooner. . . . Know that Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he comes shortly, I will see you." All the ἡγούμενοι, on the other hand, are already amongst them: "Salute all your rulers and all the saints." ¹

Were these rulers the elders of the community? In the first place, it is to be noticed that the epistle is addressed to Judæo-Christian communities, as is proved by the contents of the letter, and by external testimony.² This fact establishes a presumption that the local rulers are the elders of the community; for St. James takes for granted the existence of elders in all the Judæo-Christian communities of the dispersion. This presumption is supported by the internal evidence of the passages under consideration. The fact, that the readers are promised a visit from Paul and Timothy in the near future, shows that the letter is addressed to a definite community, or at least a definite district. The apostle's wish to be "restored" to them proves that he has already been in their midst, and that he knows therefore the exact position of the ἡγούμενοι. In treating of these superiors, however, he attributes to them the same functions, which are elsewhere characteristic of the elders. Like the elders, they have a claim to the obedience of the faithful; they are the

¹ Compare the salutation to the Philippians "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus . . . all the saints salute you."

² Clement of Alexandria apud Eusebius, vi. 14.

"leaders" (ἡγούμενοι) of the community, just as the elders are the προεστῶτες at Ephesus. They watch over the souls of the faithful, as having to render an account. We find the same idea in the first epistle of St. Peter: "Shepherd the flock that is among you, watching over them willingly and zealously . . . and when the Prince of pastors comes, you will receive an unfading crown." They teach the word of God (ἐλάλησαν τὸν λόγον), as the elders at Ephesus labour in the word and in teaching. Finally, they are, like the elders addressed by St. Peter, the examples of the flock. Their functions correspond, therefore, in every detail with the functions of elders; they are the only local superiors mentioned in the epistle; they have a special interest for St. Paul, who organised his foundations under presbyteral colleges; and they belong to the churches addressed by St. James. The exhortations are, no doubt, very general; and the terms used in the epistle to the Hebrews, as in that to the Thessalonians, are sufficiently wide to include deacons, and perhaps other ecclesiastical superiors. Nevertheless, the considerations we have already pointed out make it extremely probable, that the apostle has in view in both cases chiefly the elders of the community.

Professor Harnack¹ proposes a different explanation of the ἡγούμενοι. These leaders held, he thinks, not an office but a charism; they were preachers, endowed with the gift of the word. He appeals to the *Acts* in support of his opinion. Barsabbas and Silas, who were sent to Jerusalem by the church of Antioch, were ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. When they came to Jerusalem, they assumed the role of prophets, and as such exhorted the faithful of Jerusalem.² Were they not therefore ἡγούμενοι because they were prophets? A very short consideration will suffice to show the futility of such an objection. The expression ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς is quite distinct from the title οἱ ἡγούμενοι.

¹ Notes on the *Didache*. In a later work, "*The Constitution and Law of the Church in the first two centuries*," he seems to have slightly altered his opinion; for he says: "In the main passage (Heb. xiii. 17) there is no doubt that responsible pastors are meant." P. 36.

² Acts xv. 22, 32.

The former simply means "leading men among the brethren"; the latter is a technical term, meaning "the superiors"; the former is an adjective, the latter a noun. Whenever οἱ ἡγούμενοι is used, there is question of a ruling authority; hence submission is always inculcated. This is true, not only for the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, but also for the *Epistle of Clement*, which, moreover, interchanges the words ἡγούμενοι and πρεσβύτεροι. Whatever about ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι therefore, the substantive expression οἱ ἡγούμενοι certainly does not signify merely gifted preachers; for the evidence clearly points to a governing authority. But to return to Barsabbas and Silas. St. Luke clearly shows that the leadership of these men implied no charism of the word; for when he tells us that they consoled the brethren with many words, he takes care to add: καὶ αὐτοὶ προφήται ὄντες. If the leadership, referred to a few sentences before, already implied a charism of the word, there could be no necessity for adding this emphatic statement. The passage is capable of but one interpretation; the deputies were leaders *and* prophets, not leaders *or* prophets. Even when we have said this, it by no means follows that Silas or Barsabbas belonged to the class of superiors, mentioned as οἱ ἡγούμενοι.

The *Epistle to the Romans* gives us little data as to the organisation of the Roman church; nevertheless, it is quite certain that from an early date there were elders in the church of Rome. Clement's apology for the elders of Corinth is equally good for those of his own church. The writer was himself a disciple of St. Peter, and must have remembered the organisation of the community during the life-time of the apostle. He argues, throughout his epistle, that the elders cannot be lawfully deprived of their ministration, since their appointment comes, not from the community but from the apostles; and he clearly implies that the apostles established elders in all the churches which they founded. Clement's testimony is confirmed by Hermas. The writer of the *Visions* tells us that the Sybil ordered him to prepare two books; one of these was to be sent by Clement to foreign cities; the other was to be read in Rome, by "the

elders who preside over the church.”¹ St. Peter’s epistle to the churches of Asia Minor also furnishes an indirect proof ; for, as the apostle takes for granted the existence of elders in all the communities he addresses, it is but reasonable to suppose that a similar institution existed in the church from which he wrote.

In his great epistle, St. Paul says : “ I have written to you more boldly in some sort, as it were putting you in mind, because of the grace which is given me from God.” His object is to put them in mind of the great truths of Christianity—the basis of justification, the necessity of grace and faith, and the relation between the law and the gospel. In expounding these truths, he is complying with “ the grace given by God,” his apostleship to the Gentiles. The Roman community, as he implies, was composed chiefly of Gentiles ; it is for this reason he has been “ bold to write,” though he dislikes building on another’s foundation. It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that the apostle, writing in such circumstances, and with such objects in view, should omit to deal with the local hierarchy. He might, indeed, have mentioned the foundation of the Roman church, its first-fruits, its apostle, its present rulers ; but these things formed no part of his object in writing. He does not suppose, however, that the Roman church is without organisation or ecclesiastical superiors : “ For, as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and members of one another. And having different gifts according to the grace that is given us, either prophecy according to the rule of faith, or ministry in ministering, or he that teaches in teaching, or he that exhorts in exhorting, or he that rules with diligence (ὁ προϊστάμενος, ἐν σπουδῇ).”² Here St. Paul implies that there are different classes of members in the church ; and he mentions incidentally the familiar *προϊστάμενος*. The apostle, it is true, seems to make rulership a gift (χάρισμα) ; but in St. Paul’s vocabulary, not only the miraculous charismata, but every *gratia gratis data* is called a

¹ Vis. ii. 4.

² Rom. xii.

gift.¹ Hermas, who must have been familiar with St. Paul's epistle speaks of elders as τῶν προΐσταμένων of the Roman church. We have already met the word in St. Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians. Another participle of the same verb (προεστῶτες) is the characteristic epithet of the elders, in his epistle to Timothy. When we take into account this similarity of expression, as well as St. Paul's use of the word "gift"; and when we add the evidence from Hermas, Clement and St. Peter; it appears quite probable that St. Paul is referring, in the passage we have quoted, to the elders of the Roman community.

The results of our investigation may be summed up as follows :—The presbyterate was not merely a title of honour, but an ecclesiastical office. The elders exercised similar functions in all the churches; they administered the church temporalia; they taught and governed the flock; they exercised certain spiritual ministrations. Finally, their power was derived, not from a democratic election, but from appointment by the apostles, as we shall see more clearly in a subsequent chapter.

¹ Timothy was certainly an office-bearer at Ephesus: his office was conferred by imposition of hands; yet St. Paul does not hesitate to call it a gift (2 Tim. i. 6).

roles of the elders.

CHAPTER V.—OVERSEERS AND DEACONS.

THE word ἐπίσκοπος literally means an overseer, from ἐπί, upon, and σκοπεῖν, to look. It is frequently used in Greek literature, to signify an officer entrusted with the supervision of a particular work. The commissioners sent out by the Athenians to draw up a constitution for a new colony were called ἐπίσκοποι; likewise the commissioners of agriculture appointed by Numa Pompilius.¹ The title was also applied to the members of a committee appointed by a municipal council to carry out any particular project. The word ἐπίσκοπος is well known to the Septuagint: "Moses was angry with the officers (ἐπίσκοποι) of the army, the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds."² God tells His people through Isaiah: "I will give their rulers in peace, and their overseers (ἐπίσκοποι) in justice."³ At the building of the temple, Jahath and Abdias were overseers of the workmen—ἐπ' αὐτῶν ἐπίσκοποι. Antiochus Epiphanes appointed governors (ἐπίσκοποι) to coerce the Jews to adopt Hellenic civilisation. The word ἐπισκοπή is also found in the Septuagint, though it is not used by pagan writers. The Psalmist prays: "May his days be few; and his office (ἐπισκοπή) let another take." The same word is frequently used of God's providence for His disciples: "Visiting I have visited you (ἐπισκοπή ἐπέσκεμμαι ὑμᾶς), and I have seen all that hath befallen you in Egypt."⁴ Joseph makes his brethren swear that they will bring away his bones in the day when God will look on His people to deliver them from the land of Egypt) ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ ἣ ἐπισκέψηται ὁ θεὸς ὑμᾶς). In all these passages, the etymological meaning of the word can be traced; but the oversight also implies some kind of authority. God looks on His people to help or punish them; the officers oversee the army

¹ Dion. Halicar. Ant. Rom. ii.³ Isaiah. ix. 17.² Numb. xxi. 14; 4 Kings xi. 15.⁴ Exod. iii. 16.

with a view to maintaining discipline ; the legates of Antiochus must see that the king's orders are obeyed.

The frequent use of the word ἐπίσκοπος, both in the Old Testament and in the pagan literature, prepared the way for its adoption by the Christian Church. This historical fact, however, does not help us much in determining the nature of the episcopal office ; for it is in the new Testament documents, and not in the Jewish or pagan literature, that we must look for the special character of the supervision exercised by the Christian overseers. St. Paul says to the elders of Ephesus : " Attend to yourselves and to the whole flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you *overseers* to shepherd the church of the Lord." ¹ This discourse, as we have already remarked, occurs in one of the " we " passages of the *Acts*. The writer was therefore present when the discourse was delivered, and may be relied on as giving a faithful record. St. Luke was moreover a most conscientious reporter ; words and expressions, which he never uses on his own account, are faithfully recorded when they occur in the discourses of others.² Here we have a word, ἐπίσκοπος, which is nowhere used by St. Luke ; it occurs in a speech to which the writer listened ; it is put into the mouth of a man, who uses it in his own epistles. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the title was really applied by St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus. It is clear from St. Paul's language that these Ephesian office-bearers hold a position of authority. They are shepherds of the church of God. The same word " shepherd " is applied to the kings David and Cyrus in the Old Testament,³ because they govern the people. Christ Himself is called the shepherd and overseer of souls, in the first epistle of St. Peter. The " overseers " rule the church of God at Ephesus ; and they have the authority of the Holy Ghost to do so. Their supervision consists in attending to the flock, directing it according to the received doctrine and guarding it " from rapacious wolves, who utter perverse

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² cf. Harnack "*Law and Constitution of early Church.*" P. 291.

³ Ezech. xxxvii. 24 ; Isaiah xlv. 28.

things, and draw disciples after them." Their office is localised, for St. Paul addresses only the elders of Ephesus. Their charge is the flock *in which* the Holy Ghost has placed them overseers, the flock in which rapacious wolves will appear after the apostle's departure, the flock to which St. Paul himself has given three years of his apostolic career. "I have shown you all things," he continues, "that so labouring you must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said it is more blessed to give than to receive." Their labour must, therefore, be disinterested; they must spend themselves in the service of the weaker brethren; they must follow the example of the apostle, who coveted no man's gold or silver.

St. Paul deals at greater length with the office of the same overseers in his first epistle to Timothy: "A faithful saying: if any man desires the episcopate, he desires a good work. The overseer must therefore be blameless, a husband of one wife, sober, prudent, of good behaviour, hospitable, capable of teaching; not given to wine, nor a striker, but gentle; not contentious nor covetous, but a good ruler in his house, having his children in subjection with all gravity—if one cannot rule his own house, how will he care for the church of God?—not a neophyte, lest, puffed up by pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. He must, moreover, have a good testimony from those that are outside (the church), lest he fall into the reproach and snare of the devil."¹ The episcopate is not merely an *ordo*, or rank of honour; it is an office, a noble work. The candidate for office must therefore be blameless. The responsibility of the episcopate is shown by the exclusion of neophytes. A newly-converted brother must not be appointed, lest his head be turned by the importance of his position. The candidate must be a man of one wife;² he must not be twice married, for it is desirable that the representatives of God, "established by the Holy Ghost," should be an example to the flock in the

¹ Tim. iii.

² The apostle emphasises not the word *ἄνδρα* (husband), but *μίας* (one). As time goes on, and the virtue is more widely appreciated, we find the Church choosing her ministers exclusively from the celibate.

matter of continence. He must likewise be prudent, that he may be able to surmount the difficulties of ruling, and that he may govern the church with peace and success. He must be a teacher, capable of instructing his flock, and refuting "the ravenous wolves that utter perverse things." He must be a man of hospitality, for travelling brethren will naturally present themselves to the superiors of the community. A well-ordered house is a criterion of eligibility; if a man cannot govern his own family, there is little hope that he will successfully rule the church of God. He must not be passionate, but gentle and meek, that he may deal calmly with those that require correction.¹ He must be of good behaviour, sober, modest and generous; a model, in fine, of all those virtues, which he is to preach to others. Like the ἐπισκοποῦντες of St. Peter's epistle, the overseers are called to be examples to their flock. Finally, St. Paul mentions the necessity of a good reputation with those outside the church. The pagans will judge the faithful by the conduct of their superiors; the faults of the overseers, therefore, will reflect discredit on the whole church, close the hearts of pagans to the gospel, and consequently bring on the overseers themselves "the reproach and the snare of the devil."

In the epistle to Titus we have another catalogue of the virtues required in candidates for the episcopate: "If any man is without crime, having faithful children, not accused of riot, not unruly. For the overseer must be without crime as the steward (οἰκονόμος) of God, not proud, nor passionate, nor a drunkard, nor a striker, nor greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, loving good, prudent, just, holy, a man of self-control, embracing the faithful doctrine according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and refute those who gainsay: "For there are many unruly vain-talkers and deceivers, specially those of the circumcision, whom it is necessary to silence; who subvert whole houses, teaching what they ought not, for the sake of filthy gain." Here again St. Paul shows the importance of the episcopate, by the standard of perfection which he

¹ Cfr. 2 Tim. ii. 25-26.

requires in aspirants to the office. A striker, a man easily angered, is unsuitable; the overseer must be a man of self-control, if he is to deal successfully with the shortcomings of his flock. The condition of a man's family is to be an indication of his capacity as a ruler. Prudence, humility and hospitality are inculcated, as in the epistle to Timothy. Teaching comes into greater prominence. Exhortation in sound doctrine is one of an overseer's chief duties. His instruction is not a theology excogitated from his own brain; neither is it a gift directly received from the Holy Ghost; it is rather a *catachesis*, a handing on of the tradition which he himself has received.

St. Peter is also acquainted with the episcopate: "You were like wandering sheep, but you are now converted to the pastor and overseer of your souls."¹ Christ is the pastor and overseer referred to, but these titles betray the existence of human pastors and overseers. The apostle expresses himself more exactly in another passage of the same epistle: "When the Prince of pastors comes, you will receive an unfading crown of glory." The term "pastor" therefore—and the same may be said of "overseer"—signifies primarily an office held by men. In the same passage he writes: "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, overseeing them (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*), not by constraint, but willingly; not for the sake of gain, but zealously; neither as lording it over your charge, but becoming examples to the flock." The overseers are evidently ecclesiastical superiors; they exercise the pastoral charge; they shepherd the flock by overseeing it; the pastorate and the episcopate are one and the same function. Their authority is localised, for they are exhorted to shepherd the flock that is *among* them. Their functions, in so far as they are mentioned, correspond with those of the overseers in the Pauline churches. The same qualifications are required; the same faults are condemned. The overseers in each case are the spiritual rulers of the church, and the examples of the flock. Willing and zealous oversight is commended by St. Peter; zealous labour for the weak by St. Paul.

¹ Pet. ii. 25. v. 1. seq.

Despotic government is condemned by St. Peter ; proud and passionate rule by St. Paul. From each apostle we hear the same exhortation against ministering for gain.¹

The epistle of Clement furnishes important information as to the origin and universality of the episcopal office. The writer's object was to restore peace to the church of Corinth, which was just then greatly disturbed by a sedition against its office-bearers. Clement points out, on the one hand, the evils of jealousy and envy, and on the other, the advantages of obedience and godliness. The creation, he says, affords a striking example of peace, order and harmony. The constitution of the army illustrates the necessity of submission to authority. The members of the human body "compare and unite in subjection, that the whole body may be saved. . . . So in our case . . . let each man be subject to his neighbour, according as he was appointed in his special gift."² But Clement reserves for last the example that best illustrates his argument. God required from the Jews a fixed order in their sacrifices and ministrations : "Unto the high priest his proper services has been assigned ; to the priests their proper office is appointed ; upon the levites their proper ministrations are laid ; the layman is bound by the layman's ordinances." All these are but figures of the organisation of the Christian Church : "The apostles received the Gospel for us from Jesus Christ ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So, Christ is from God, and the apostles from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in the appointed order. . . . So, preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be overseers and deacons unto

¹ The sin of avarice is connected by St. Paul, not with an administrative, but with a magisterial function. The vain-talkers and seducers teach what they ought not for the sake of filthy gain. The same idea is strongly in evidence in St. Peter's second epistle : "Among you also there shall be false teachers . . . by reason of whom the way of truth shall be spoken evil of. And in covetousness will they with feigned words make merchandise of you." The apostolic admonition is directed therefore, not against dishonesty in handling the funds of the church, but against the preaching of false doctrine pandering to the passions of the multitudes.

² Clem. 38.

those that should believe. And this they did in no new fashion ; for it had been written concerning overseers and deacons from early times, for the Scripture says : I will appoint their overseers in righteousness, and their deacons in faith."¹ The overseers hold a position of authority, as the examples he gives, and the quotation from Isaiah clearly imply. Their powers come, not from the community, but from God Himself, through Christ and the apostles. These words of Clement remind us of the passage in the *Acts*, where St. Luke says that Paul and Barnabas " appointed for them elders in every church."² They are likewise a fitting commentary on the words of St. Paul : " The Holy Ghost has placed you overseers to rule the church of God."³ It is interesting to note that the apostles appointed overseers everywhere they preached, in country and town. This is the testimony of a man who wrote only thirty years after the death of Saints Peter and Paul, " while the voice of the apostle," as Irenaeus says, " was still in his ears, and their actions before his eyes." It comes from the very centre of Christianity ; it is uttered in the name of the metropolitan church, which, by its intimate intercourse with members of all the Christian communities of the empire, must necessarily have been aware of the organisation set up by the apostles in all parts of Christendom. It was directed moreover to one of the most important churches of the East, a church which had the most intimate intercourse with the Pauline foundations of Asia Minor, and which had the apostle himself permanently in its midst for a period of eighteen months. Clement's epistle is, therefore, an unimpeachable witness to the existence of overseers in all the Christian communities.

It was not Clement's object to treat in detail of the functions of the overseers ; his purpose in writing was merely to show that they have a divine right to rule, and that, consequently, they cannot be set aside by the faithful. Nevertheless he gives us incidentally some hints as to the nature of their office. It is one of the overseers' duties to offer the gifts

¹ Clem. 42.

² Acts xiv. 22.

³ *ib.* xx. 28.

blamelessly and holily.¹ The offering of the gifts was a liturgical act.² The congregation first presented the offerings to the overseer, and he in turn offered them to God, and consecrated the Eucharist. Hence the overseer is said to offer the gifts, not only blamelessly, but also holily or religiously. The episcopal office is also called a ministration (λειτουργία). The word is used by Clement in close connection with the offering of the gifts: "These men we consider unjustly thrown out from their ministration. For it will be no light sin, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the overseer's office blamelessly and holily." The word λειτουργία in classical Greek means a public service. When a wealthy citizen defrayed the expense of a public work, he performed a λειτουργία. The idea remains the same in Christian literature, except that the service is spiritual. The celebration of the Eucharist is a public act; the celebrant offers for the whole community; he is the sacrificing organ of the body corporate. Every member who attends at the sacrifice thereby renders service to God. The word λειτουργία is also found in the *Acts*:³ "There were in the church of Antioch prophets and teachers. . . . While they were ministering to the Lord (λειτουργούντων) and fasting, the Holy Ghost said: separate me Paul and Barnabas." The only public service they could offer to the Lord was the service of worship. The essence of this worship consisted, as Clement implies, in offering the gifts; for the Eucharist was the centre of Christian worship from the earliest days of Christianity.⁴ For Clement, therefore, the episcopate implies a pastoral and a sacerdotal function. The overseers hold office for life, and they exercise their functions by divine right.

We find reference to the overseers again in the *Didache*, or *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*: "On the Lord's day gather yourselves together, and break bread and give thanks, first

¹ προσφέρειν τὰ δῶρα ἀμέμπτως καὶ ὁσίως. Clem. 44.

² The same word προσφέρειν is used by Malachy of the clean oblation; and the passage is quoted by the *Didache*. Clement himself speaks of the Jewish sacrifices as τὰς προσφερὰς. Dr. Hatch is quite mistaken, therefore in representing the offering of the gifts as an act of administration.

³ Acts xiii. 1-2.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi.; Acts ii. 42. 46.

confessing your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure. And let no man who has a dispute with his fellow join your assembly, till they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled; for this is the sacrifice spoken of by the Lord; In every place and at every time, offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the nations. Elect for yourselves, therefore, overseers and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek, not lovers of money, but truthful and approved. For they also perform for you the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not, for they are your honourable men with the prophets and teachers."¹ The writer here deals with the Eucharist as a sacrifice,² and urges the necessity of offering that sacrifice clean and undefiled. Elect, *therefore* (οὖν), overseers worthy of the Lord. The connection is obvious; the overseers,³ as Clement says, offer the gifts. It is for this reason that the community must elect overseers "worthy of the Lord." It is not merely with a view to the reception of the sacrament, that this qualification is required, for, in the first place, the writer is speaking, not of the sacrament, but of the sacrifice; and secondly, it was the custom at this time for all the faithful to communicate. The overseers must be worthy of the Lord, because they come into closer contact with the sacrificed body of the Lord, than the rest of the faithful; they have a special function in connection with the oblation. Confession of sins is enjoined, "that your sacrifice may be pure"; universal charity is required, that the sacrifice may not be defiled; a clean conscience is essential to the worthy fulfilment of God's command to "offer Me a clean oblation." It is this consideration—the necessity of a clean and undefiled sacrifice—that suggests the election of overseers worthy of the Lord. The overseers are elected, therefore, for a spiritual and

¹ Did. xiv. xv.

² In chap. ix. and x. he has dealt with the Eucharist as a sacrament.

³ The *Didache* speaks in a brief general way, without distinguishing either the qualifications or the functions of overseers and deacons. We learn from the *Apology* of Justin Martyr, however, that the deacons assisted at the sacrifice but did not themselves offer it. (Justin I. Apol. 65-66).

religious purpose. The *Didache* no less than the epistle of Clement, implies that they are the priests or sacrificers ; and as such they must be worthy of the Lord, that they may offer the gifts blamelessly and holily.

The mention of the Eucharist leads the writer to discuss the office of those who celebrate it ; hence he requires the election of overseers worthy of the Lord. He adds however, as an afterthought, the virtues required in those same office-bearers by reason of another function. They must be meek, disinterested, truthful and approved. The demand made upon a man's meekness in celebrating the Eucharist can hardly have been so great as to require a special mention of the virtue in the passage before us. The same may be said of the virtue of veracity. Truthfulness implies a magisterial function ; for there is little room for its exercise in a purely liturgical, or purely disciplinary office. The word " approved " is employed in the same connection by the *Didache*. Approval consists in testing a man's teaching by the rule of tradition : " Whoever shall come and teach you all those things that have been said before, receive him ; but if the teacher himself be perverted, and teach a different doctrine to the destruction thereof, hear him not."¹ Hence, " every prophet *approved* and found true . . . shall not be judged before you." The word " disinterested," coming in close connection with " truthful," suggests at once the same train of thought, which we find expressed in the epistles of Saints Peter and Paul. Love of gain, they tell us, is at the root of false doctrine ; a covetous man, therefore, cannot be relied on as a faithful overseer. This same idea finds expression in an earlier chapter of the *Didache* itself : " If he ask money, he is a false prophet " ; and again : " No prophet, when he orders a table in the Spirit, shall eat of it ; otherwise he is a false prophet." Disinterestedness seems to be required, therefore, as a precaution against false doctrine, rather than as a qualification for an administrative function.²

¹ Did. xi.

² If, however, there is any reference to temporal administration, we have a proof, not that the overseers were merely administrators of "*temporalia*," as Dr. Hatch thinks, but that they were administrators as well as priests and teachers.

The introduction of the word *ἄνδρας*, and the nature of the virtues which follow it prove that in the qualifications we have just considered there is reference to a second function of the overseers, a function of teaching.¹ The writer has already given us a reason for the election of overseers worthy of the Lord; he adds, rather awkwardly, that these same office-bearers must have all the qualities of ecclesiastical teachers. In the next sentence he gives the reason for this requirement: "They exercise for *you* the ministry of the prophets and teachers." The "for" of *ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι* connects, therefore, not with the Eucharistic sacrifice, mentioned in the previous chapter, but with the clause immediately preceding, "men disinterested, truthful and approved." The word *λειτουργοῦσι* here seems to signify a ministry of teaching. We are led to this conclusion by several considerations.

The writer has nowhere told us that the "teachers" have any special power in connection with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. With regard to the prophets, he has mentioned incidentally that they may give thanks as much as they please. The reference, however, is to the Eucharist, not as a sacrifice, but as a sacrament. Having dealt at length with the manner in which the faithful are to give thanks—"After ye are satisfied thus give ye thanks (*εὐχαριστήσατε*)"—he adds: "But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they please." This is the only passage² in which he discusses the relation of the prophet to the Eucharist; and as he is speaking merely of offering thanksgiving after communion,

¹ *Χειροτονήσατε, οὖν, ἐναντοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους ἀξίους τοῦ κυρίου, ἄνδρας πρᾶεῖς καὶ ἀφιλαργύρους καὶ ἀληθεῖς καὶ δεδοκιμασμένους. ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων.*

² There is no ground for supposing that the word *ἀρχιερεῖς* in chapter xiii. is to be taken in the strict sense of priesthood. The writer is comparing the prophet with the Jewish priests because both have a right to support. The foundation for this claim on the part of the prophet is a spiritual ministration; but that ministration, as the whole context shows, is one, not of sacrificing, but of teaching. Compare Hippolytus (*Adv. Haer. proemium*): "But we as their (the apostles') successors, and as participators in this grace, *high-priesthood* and office of teaching must not be found deficient in vigilance." The title "priests" (*ιερεῖς*) does not appear to have been adopted by the Christian superiors till the end of the second century. Probably its connection with paganism made the word unpopular in Christian circles.

there can be no question of the liturgical act of sacrifice. Again, the ministry in question is preeminently the ministry of the prophets and teachers. He adds rather emphatically : " Even they " (*i.e.* the overseers and deacons) exercise the same ministry among their own flock. As he has said nothing before of the power of the prophets or teachers to celebrate the Eucharist, and as he clearly implies that such a power always exists in the local community, it is difficult to see how he could, on the one hand, appeal to the sacrificial power as characteristic of the prophets and teachers ; and why, on the other hand, he should use the emphatic expression λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοί in reference to the local superiors.

The connection, " Elect *therefore* overseers " is sufficient proof that the celebration of the Eucharist was primarily the ministry of the overseers, and not of the prophets and teachers. And how could it have been otherwise ? The Holy Sacrifice was the chief purpose of the local assembly. We learn from the *Didache* itself that the community might be frequently without a prophet. The power of celebrating can hardly have been characteristic of the prophetic order therefore. The writer has dealt with one, and only one, function of the prophets and teachers, namely the ministry of the word ; but he has dealt with that at considerable length. When he speaks in a later chapter of the ministry of the prophets and teachers, is it not clear that he refers to the ministry already described ? The overseers exercise the ministry of the prophets and teachers ; and that ministry is the service of the word.

Here we come into contact with some of the favourite theories of modern non-Catholic scholars. Professor Harnack finds in the passage before us a proof, that the ministry of the word did not originally belong to the local superiors, but was taken over by them gradually, according as the charismatical teachers and prophets died out.¹ Professor Réville is equally strong on this so-called usurpation. The *Didache* " is perhaps the oldest witness we have of the gradual absorption of the spiritual functions of the primitive free

¹ Op. cit. P. 190-241.

religious life by the ecclesiastical dignitaries."¹ One would imagine from the words of these gentlemen that there were no *local* teachers in the early Church. The prophetic ministry, as it appears in the *Didache*, is peculiar in this, that its exercise is not confined to any community or district. The prophet is an itinerant missionary: "He shall not abide more than a single day, or if necessary a second; if he abide three days, he is a false prophet."² While the prophet in present, he is the honoured man of the community; and if he settles there, he receives the first-fruits of all produce. The teaching of the *Didache* in this respect is not to be wondered at; St. Paul tells us that the mission of the prophets is second only to that of the apostles. The overseers exercise in their own community the ministry of the prophets: "Select, therefore . . . overseers disinterested, truthful and approved . . . for they perform for you the service of the prophets and teachers."³ The emphatic words are *ὑμῶν*, the local community, and *αὐτοί*, the overseers. The meaning is, therefore, select only the most approved men as overseers, for the overseers exercise among their own flock the same magisterial function, which the prophets exercise for the Church at large. The writer's point is not to put forward a new claim for the overseers; but, taking it for granted that they are teachers in their own community, to draw from that fact a lesson for the faithful. He has already shown the greatness of the prophetic ministry; within the narrow sphere of their own community, the overseers perform the same ministration; the faithful must therefore exercise the greatest care in choosing candidates for so exalted an office. It is in the same way exactly that honour is due to the overseers. The prophets are honourable wherever they go, for their mission is universal. The overseers have no claim to universal honour; but they have a claim to respect in their own church: "Therefore despise them not, αὐτοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν οἱ τετιμημένοι ὑμῶν μετὰ τῶν προφητῶν." The words *αὐτοί* and *ὑμῶν* are again emphatic: "They are *your* (if no other community's) honourable men, together with the prophets." The passage reminds us of St. Paul's

¹ *Les origines de l'épiscopat.*

² Did. xi.

³ *ὑμῶν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν κ.τ.λ.*

words to the Corinthians : " If to others I am not an apostle, yet to you I am."¹

There is no ground for supposing that the overseers have lately acquired this ministry ; on the contrary, the writer works on a well-known fact, to point out a lesson to those responsible for the election of the overseers. He gives not the slightest hint that the local office-bearers are encroaching on the domain of the prophets, or that he is conscious of passing through a transition period. He seems to say, indeed, that the prophets are the Church's great teachers ; but he adds quite as explicitly that *for the local community* the office-bearers exercise precisely the same ministry. The orthodoxy of the writer has been questioned, because of his glorification of the prophets ; one Catholic scholar, at least, is inclined to regard him as a forerunner of Montanism. Nevertheless, I can find nothing in his theory of prophecy, that cannot be reconciled with St. Paul's epistles. There is a great difference between the theory of the *Didache*, and that of the Montanists. In the former the tradition of the Church is supreme, in the latter the word of the prophet ; in the former the false prophet is clearly recognisable, in the latter he cannot be recognised at all. On the other hand, the amount of attention devoted by the *Didache* to the prophets and teachers—and it devotes to their ministry far more space, than to that of the office-bearers—is the best answer to the objections of Réville and Harnack. A writer who esteemed so highly the prophetic ministry could not fail to notice the usurpation of the office-bearers, if it really took place. If, on the other hand, the writer of the *Didache* was himself under the influence of the supposed pro-hierarchical tendency, he would have betrayed himself by keeping the prophets in the background, and pushing forward the overseers ; yet this is precisely what he has not done.

The prophets may or may not have been dying out at this time, but the *Didache* gives us no information on the matter. The writer implies, indeed, that a church may be sometimes without a prophet. From the mere fact that a prophet was

¹ 1 Cor. xi

allowed to remain only a single day with any particular community, it necessarily followed that the prophetic service was not always available. But it is nowhere stated or implied that this state of things was a novelty. An analogous condition of things existed in the Church of the apostolic period. The office-bearers were the ordinary local teachers; if one of the congregation was inspired at the assembly, his services were willingly availed of. When the charismatic ministry finally disappeared, the office-bearers remained the sole teachers; but it would be quite illogical to conclude that the prophetic ministry passed into the hands of the overseers. The latter never claimed authority to teach on the same ground as the prophets. The overseers taught in virtue of their ordinary ecclesiastical jurisdiction. They were placed by the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, to shepherd the flock amongst them. The prophets, on the other hand, spoke merely as the mouth-pieces of God; they were instruments of revelation; but they never claimed, so far as I can find, any authority to punish "gainsayers." The episcopate was an office from the beginning; prophecy was never more than a gift or charism in the strict sense. When the prophets died out, therefore, their ministry did not pass into the hands of the overseers, as Harnack contends; it simply disappeared entirely.

In dealing above with the qualifications required by the *Didache* in candidates for office, we omitted the consideration of the word *πραΐς* (meek). We did so because it seems to imply a third function, the maintenance of discipline. Meekness is required, no doubt, by St. Paul with a view to the proper discharge of one's magisterial duties: "The servant of God must not be contentious, but gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, instructing with meekness those who oppose themselves."¹ Nevertheless, this virtue is required especially in those who, in virtue of their office, have charge of the discipline of the community. Hence the *Didache* goes on to say in the next sentence: "Reprove one another, not in anger, but in peace." The writer, however, is a severe

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 25.

disciplinarian ; for he recommends excommunication as the punishment for injury to one's neighbour : " Let no man speak to anyone who has gone wrong towards his neighbour ; neither let him hear a word from you, till he repent." Where the punishment was so serious, there must have been some responsible authority to regulate its application. The overseers, as their name implies, and as their meekness suggests, were the natural claimants for this authority. As the Pauline overseers were superiors of discipline, and as such were required to be meek and patient ; there can be little doubt that here also the virtue of meekness, followed so closely by the words " not in anger but in peace," is required in the overseers by reason of their pastoral charge.

In Liberal Protestant circles, quite another view is taken of the primitive episcopal office. Dr. Hatch, whom we shall take as a representative of this school, endeavours to prove that ἐπίσκοπος was the title in classical Greek for the financial administrator of an association. His object is to establish a presumption in favour of his theory of a purely administrative episcopate. We shall not delay to discuss the classical meaning of the word, though it is clear from the examples quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that ἐπίσκοπος did not necessarily imply financial administration. We might remark, however, that Dr. Hatch takes it for granted that the title was borrowed from classical Greek ; indeed his argument is beside the point on any other hypothesis. He completely overlooks the influence of the Old Testament, when he comes to consider the origin and meaning of the Christian overseership. Now, it is quite certain that the title of the office, ἐπισκοπή, was derived from the Old Testament, for it is not found in classical Greek.¹ This fact alone established a strong presumption that the name of the officer, ἐπίσκοπος, came from the same source. The frequent use of the word in the Septuagint confirms this presumption ; for the early Christians were much more likely to borrow from the Old Testament, than from the literature or institutions of paganism. Clement of Rome

¹ Notice that St. Peter quotes the Psalmist to prove that another must receive the ἐπισκοπή of Judas. Acts i. 20.

was certainly not in sympathy with Dr. Hatch's theory ; for he actually quotes the Prophet Isaiah, to prove that the appointment of overseers was the fulfilment of prophecy. If Clement's appeal to Scripture is not quite convincing, it nevertheless shows that Dr. Hatch's analogy is misleading, and that it is based on a partial and one-sided view of the evidence. We may here call attention again to a point already insisted on, that it is not in the pagan, but in the Christian literature, we must seek the technical meaning attached to words by the Christian communities. The passage we have already examined prove beyond doubt, I think, that the overseer was never merely an administrative officer in the Church ; it matters little, therefore, what *ἐπίσκοπος* means in the pagan inscriptions of the first century.

Hatch's arguments from the Christian documents require more consideration. "The Christian associations," he says, "were differentiated by the element of philanthropy. . . . The importance of the philanthropic element in the Christian societies gave a corresponding importance to the administrative officers, by whom funds were received and dispensed. . . . Of this vast system of ecclesiastical administration the *ἐπίσκοπος* was the pivot and the centre. His functions in reference to it were of primary importance." Hence, an overseer's office is called a *λειτουργία*, *οἰκονομία* and *διακονία*, titles which "were the analogue in the Church of the administrative service which citizens rendered to the State." The overseer from an early date exercised certain secondary functions, but his primary duty was administration. This is shown by two considerations : "In the first place, there is the argument from the abuses of the office. . . . In the second place, there is the argument from current conceptions of the office. No small part of the eulogies of bishops . . . are relative to their care of the distressed, and to their protection of the widow and the orphan."¹

Hatch's theory of free association is at the bottom of all his speculations on the nature of the Christian societies, and on the nature of the episcopal office. We have already

¹ Op. cit. synopsis and ch. ii.

pointed out the incompatibility of this theory with the teaching of the apostles ; and we have shown, moreover, that the Christian associations were primarily, not philanthropic, but religious societies. It is unnecessary to bring up these questions for discussion again ; there is so little ground for Hatch's contention on either of these points, that we wonder what can have called it forth, unless perhaps a sub-conscious desire to get rid of a divinely appointed hierarchy. His theory of the episcopate has little more to recommend it. In the first century documents, which deal with overseers, we have reference to their functions as pastors, teachers and liturgical ministers, but no clear reference to what Dr. Hatch is pleased to call their primary duty. The apostles and elders are the only superiors to whom financial administration is explicitly attributed ;¹ yet it is the overseers that Hatch sets down as administrators primarily. It would be interesting to know on what principle this discrimination is based. If temporal administration did not deprive the apostles of their primary apostolic character, on what ground does Dr. Hatch base his view of the episcopate ? He admits that the overseers from an early date exercised other functions ; but temporal administration, he tells us, was the essence of their office. He appeals to the terms *λειτουργία*, *διακονία*, and *οικονομία* :

The word *λειτουργία* is found for the first time in the *Acts*. The prophets and teachers were *ministering* to the Lord at Antioch, when the Holy Ghost called Paul and Barnabas. The passage is an awkward one for Dr. Hatch, for it proves that not only the overseers, but the prophets and teachers also were administrators. This, I am sure, is not part of his theory. The *λειτουργία* in question has really nothing to do with administration. This is shown by the addition of the words " to the Lord " ; the only service which could have been offered to the Lord was the service of worship ; the *λειτουργία* represents, therefore, a liturgical, not an administrative service. The word is used of the overseer's office in the *Didache* and in the epistle of Clement. In the former

¹ Acts iv. 35. v. 2. xi. 30. Notice that Hatch makes elders and overseers distinct classes.

the overseers are said to have among their own flock the *λειτουργία* of the prophets and teachers. The reference is to the magisterial function, as we pointed out above. In this passage also, administration is out of the question, not only because the *λειτουργία* is characteristic of the prophets, but also because it is connected with no particular community, but belongs to a universal mission. In the epistle of Clement the *λειτουργία* consists chiefly in offering the gifts blamelessly and holily, that is, in celebrating the Eucharist. Hatch does not gain much, therefore, by his appeal to *λειτουργία*.

In the epistle to Titus, St. Paul requires an overseer to be "without crime as the steward of God."¹ We do not see any reason for finding in the steward of a God a financial administrator. The latter would rather be a steward of the community, at least in Dr. Hatch's theory. The qualification "without crime" suggests that there is question of a higher stewardship than that of finance. The apostle gives us a clue to his real meaning when he says: "Let a man so account us as ministers of Christ, and dispensers (*οικονόμους*) of the mysteries of God."² The *οικονομία* consists in the administration, not of the *temporalia* of the community, but of the mysteries—the word and the sacraments—of God. Hence, in the same passage to Titus, St. Paul deals at length with the magisterial duties of the overseers. St. Peter likewise speaks of those who are "good stewards" (*οικονόμοι*) of the manifold grace of God."³ Ignatius, writing to the Ephesians,⁴ employs the same metaphor to describe the authority of the bishop: "For everyone whom the master of the household sends to the steward over his house, we ought so to receive as him who sent him. Plainly, therefore, we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself." Hatch refers to this passage of Ignatius, as if it supported his theory. Anyone who reads the epistles of Ignatius will agree, I think, that nothing was farther from the mind of the writer than Hatch's view of the episcopate.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the word *διακονία*.

¹ ἀνέγκλητον ὡς Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον. ² 1 Cor. iv. 1. ³ 1 Pet. iv. 10.

⁴ Eph. vi.; Cfr. Matt. x. 40.

Dr. Hatch does not, of course, refer to the specific office of the deacons ; for the episcopate was a distinct office. The wider *διακονία* is frequently mentioned in the New Testament. We have the ministry of the word, the ministry of grace, even the ministry of God among the Gentiles. We never hear of the ministry of financial administration. Dr. Hatch's argument really rests on the use of the word in Greek literature ; and the same may be said of his argument from the two titles already discussed. It matters very little for our present purpose whether these words in Greek literature imply, as Hatch maintains, a temporal administration. In the Christian documents they have another and more spiritual meaning ; and it is this meaning that we must take into account, when we examine the nature of the episcopal office.

We now come to the argument from the abuses of the office : " The larger proportion of all the abuses of the episcopal office, which are provided against in both Canon and Civil Law, are relative to the administration of church funds." The episcopate, therefore, is primarily an administrative office. The premises scarcely warrant Dr. Hatch's conclusion. At most, they prove that the episcopate included administrative *as well as* other duties. Hatch himself must admit this ; for not all the abuses, but only " the greater proportion " of them refer to administration. His appeal to laws passed in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, shows the weakness of his case. Was it necessary to come down so late to discover the nature of the primitive episcopal charge ? And even at the period when these laws were made, did the office of Cyprian, Athanasius, Ambrose and Augustine, consist primarily in the administration of church funds ? The explanation of the laws against covetousness lies in the fact that the temptations to maladministrations were greater than temptations to any other violation of duty. Hatch could have got a catalogue of episcopal virtues dating from a much earlier period than the provisions of the civil law. He might have referred to the epistles of St. Paul, or Clement of Rome, or to the *Didache*. If he is compelled by these documents to admit that the overseers had other functions

besides administration, on what ground can he make the administration of church funds the essence of the primitive episcopate? These documents nowhere mention the administrative duties of the overseer, though they insist very strongly upon his pastoral, magisterial and liturgical duties. Not one of the many virtues mentioned by St. Paul is required with a view to honest administration, with the very doubtful exception of ἀφιλαργύρος (not fond of money). Is it not surprising that the early writers, especially St. Paul, should insist so strongly upon minor points, while they neglect to mention the primary duty of the overseer? History proves that it was in the very matter, which Hatch considers essential, temptations were greatest, yet the inspired writers seem to demand every kind of qualification except that which makes a man a good administrator. Why should the episcopate, in Dr. Hatch's view, be limited to a man only once married, or to a teacher, or to one old in the faith? What is the meaning of the long list of virtues required by St. Paul? Would it not have been much better had he simply said—what he has not said—the overseer must above all things be an honest man?

Dr. Hatch speaks of the current conceptions of the office. What better indication could we have of these conceptions, than the passages already quoted? Hatch would pass over all this evidence, and search among the tombstones of the catacombs for an inscription that would suit his theory. When a man's care for the widow and the orphan is recorded over his grave, there we have the true idea of the episcopate. So Dr. Hatch tells us. A much earlier and more representative eulogy of the episcopal office can be found in the epistle of Clement. The injured elders of Corinth have offered the gifts of the overseer's office blamelessly and holily; nevertheless they have been expelled from the "place" and the "ministration," which have been honoured by them blamelessly. What is true of the elders is true of the overseers, as we shall see presently.

The results of our investigations upon the episcopal office may be summed up as follows:—Before the death of the

apostles there existed in every Christian community a body of overseers. These overseers were ecclesiastical superiors; they were appointed for life; and they exercised their jurisdiction in virtue of an authority derived from God, through Christ and the apostles. They were pastors of the flock, and as such enjoyed a legislative, judicial and magisterial authority. They likewise exercised a liturgical function, the essence of which was the celebration of the Eucharist. The administration of the public alms was also under their control probably; though we can only argue on this point, from the subsequent duties of the monarchical bishop, and from the reference to the *elders* of Jerusalem in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

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In close connection with the overseers are the deacons; "overseers and deacons" being a frequent combination in the early documents. The word *διάκονος* literally means a servant; and the abstract *διακονία* means a service or ministry. We hear of the ministry (*διακονία*) of the word,¹ the ministry of the apostolate,² the ministry of reconciliation.³ The apostles are ministers of Christ and of the Gospel;⁴ so are Timothy and Tychicus. Those who have gifts are ministers of the manifold grace of God.⁵ St. Paul applies to himself the title *διάκονος* almost as often as *ἀπόστολος*; and *διακονία* is the term he uses most frequently to designate his ministry.⁶ The word has a wide use, therefore, in the New Testament, without reference to any specific service. But it is also used in a narrower sense, to denote a special class of office-bearers called deacons. When used in this sense, *διάκονος* is usually opposed to *ἐπίσκοπος*. Hence St. Paul speaks of the overseers and deacons at Philippi; and when he describes for Timothy the virtues of an overseer, he immediately adds those of a deacon. The titles are combined in the same manner in the *Didache* and in the epistle of Clement. The frequency of this joint enumeration strongly suggests

¹ Acts vi. 4.

² Acts i. 17.

³ 2 Cor. v. 18.

⁴ *ib.* xi. 23.; Eph. iii. 7.

⁵ 1 Pet iv. 10.

⁶ Rom. xi. 13.; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6. iv. 1; Eph. iii. 7. Col. i. 23. 25.

that the deacons were in a special way the "servants" or "ministers" of the overseers. If the deacon's office consisted chiefly in assisting the overseers, the inferior officer would naturally be called *διάκονος* in antithesis to *ἐπίσκοπος*. It is not easy to explain on any other hypothesis why ecclesiastical officers should be given a title, which implies subjection rather than authority.

The first addition to the hierarchy was made, when the apostles shared a part of their powers with "the seven" at Jerusalem. These seven men are not called deacons, elders or overseers in the *Acts*; they are simply the "seven." It might appear from a superficial reading of the *Acts*, that they exercised no spiritual functions, but that their duties belonged exclusively to the temporal order. A closer study, however, will reveal the sacred character of their duties. From the care exercised in their selection, from the requirement that they should be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, from their installation in office by prayer and the solemn imposition of hands, as well as from their subsequent history, it is clear that they were invested with spiritual powers. We find St. Stephen immediately afterwards engaged in the ministry of the word. Certain Jews, we are told, contradicted him, but they could not resist "the Spirit and the wisdom with which he spoke." It is interesting to note that the two chief qualities required in the seven—fulness of the Spirit and fulness of the wisdom—are the secret of Stephen's success, in his defence of the Gospel. When the seven were scattered by the persecution, which followed Stephen's martyrdom, Philip went down to Samaria and there preached the Gospel. St. Luke sees nothing strange in this propagandist activity on the part of Stephen and Philip; it evidently belonged to their ministry.

The tradition of the Church has always pointed to the seven as the first deacons. Irenaeus ¹ tells us that "the Nicolaites are the followers of that Nicholas, who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles." Again, he says: "Stephen, who was chosen the first deacon by the

¹ Iren. Adv. Haer. i. 26. 3. iii. 12. 10.

apostles, was the first to follow in the footsteps of the Lord by martyrdom." Philip, who converted the Samaritans, is called a deacon by Eusebius.¹ The author of the *Philosophumena*, and St. Epiphanius bear testimony to the same tradition. St. John Chrysostom² is inclined to depart from the common view, not because of any tradition to the contrary, but for exegetical reasons. "Were they deacons?" he asks. "It was not to the deacons, but to the elders, that administration belonged in the churches. On the other hand there was no bishop (overseer) yet, outside the apostolic college. I *think*, therefore, that the name of deacons or of elders was not yet in use, but that they (the seven) had the orders of the latter." Chrysostom has evidently no tradition behind him. Dr. Döllinger, however, supports this view; and argues that we cannot suppose that St. Luke omits all reference to the "institution of the elders," while he records at length the institution of a minor office. Neither of these arguments, however, creates any difficulty. We can conclude nothing from the silence of St. Luke; for he records the institution of only one order, though he certainly knew of the existence of two. His reason for recording the appointment of the seven was probably the exceptional nature of the circumstances which led up to it. The administration, to which Chrysostom takes exception, was nothing more than the distribution of alms, a duty which devolved upon the deacons in every church. We may take it, therefore, as certain, on the strength of an early and consistent tradition, that the seven were deacons.

St. Luke gives us very little information as to the duties of the deacons. They were, in the first place, the ministers of alms, the outdoor relieving officer, of the community. This remained one of the chief duties of a deacon for several centuries. Hermas tells us, in the middle of the second century, that "those who have spots are the deacons that exercised their office ill, and plundered the livelihood of widows and orphans, and made gains for themselves from the ministrations, which they received to perform."³ Cyprian likewise charges Nicostratus with having defrauded widows

¹ Eus. ii. i.² Hom. xiv. in Act.³ Sim. ix. 26.

and orphans, and robbed the church. The deacons also preached the Gospel. This is shown, not only by the evangelical activity of Stephen and Philip, but also by the qualities required in the candidates for office. The seven to be selected at Jerusalem must be men of good repute, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom. The first of these qualities was evidently required, to allay the fears of those who complained of unfair administration. The distribution of alms did not require that the relieving officer should be a man full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. St. Luke gives us the explanation of these qualifications, when he tells us that the Jews could not withstand the Spirit and the wisdom with which St. Stephen spoke. The possession of the Spirit and wisdom was required with a view to the ministry of the word. The same idea runs through the short prayer, which the *Canons of Hippolytus* prescribe for the ordination of a deacon. The bishop prays: "utque concedas mores sine peccato coram omnibus hominibus doctrinamque pro multis, quam gentem copiosam in ecclesia sacra ad salutem perducat sine ullo scandalo."¹ It is interesting to note that preaching remains in theory one of the deacon's chief duties to the present day. The ordaining bishop still says to the ordained: "Diaconum enim oportet ministrare ad altare, baptizare et praedicare."

In the first epistle to Timothy, St. Paul lays down for his disciple the qualifications he must demand in a candidate for deaconship: "Deacons must be grave, not double tongued (talebearers), not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy gain; holding the mystery of faith in a clean conscience. And let these be proved first; then let them serve as deacons, if they are blameless. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling well their children and their own houses. For those that have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good rank, and much freedom of speech (*παρρησίαν*) in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."² This catalogue of qualifications is, in many respects, similar to that which the apostle has just given for the overseers; a fact which supports the

¹ Can. 41.² 1 Tim. iii.

suggestion already made, that the deacons were assistants of the overseers. The qualifications themselves do not give us much precise information. It is plain, however, that St. Paul does not regard the deacons merely as relieving officers. There is no reason why a man who had been married twice should not be employed to distribute alms to the poor ; nor is there any reason for supposing that the relief of distress would give a man confidence or freedom of speech in the faith. With the possible exception of the words " not greedy of filthy gain," St. Paul makes no reference to this part of a deacon's work. His great object is to secure suitable candidates for the higher functions of the diaconate. It appears to be the duty of the deacons to assist the overseers in the maintenance of discipline. The apostle has just said that the overseer must be " a man of one wife, a good ruler of his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; for if one cannot rule one's own house, how will one take charge of the church of God ? " A few sentences farther on, he says : " Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling well their children and their own homes." These words, coming so closely after a similar qualification in the case of overseers, can only be taken as representing the same train of thought in the mind of the apostle. The deacons, like the overseers, must be good rulers ; for it is their duty to assist in the government of the church of God. It is for the same reason that they are required to be blameless, that they may be free from the faults which they are to note in others. Again, they must not be double-tongued. St. Polycarp uses the same expression, and adds " not calumniators." In these words there is probably a reference to the deacon's duty of looking after the faithful, and reporting to the overseers any abuses he may notice. In the Clementine *Epistle to James*, this duty is explicitly stated : " Let the deacons . . . be as eyes to the bishops, carefully inquiring into the doings of each member of the church, (ascertaining) who is about to sin, in order that, being arrested with admonition by the president, he may not accomplish his sin."¹ The deacon, we are told,

¹ Ep. to James xii. Cfr. Clem. Hom. iii. 67.

acquires by the fulfilment of his duties much boldness (or freedom of speech) in the faith. This remark seems to imply that the deacons exercised a magisterial function. The words, however, are so vague that we cannot argue from them with confidence. The qualification, "not given to much wine," seems to be required in view of their functions at the agapae and the celebration of the Eucharist.¹

The *Didache* gives us further data as to the nature of the deacon's office. Having treated of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the writer continues: "Elect *therefore* for yourselves overseers and deacons worthy of the Lord." The connection proves, as we have already pointed out, that the sacrificial act pertained in a special way to the overseers and deacons. The *Didache* does not explain what part of the liturgical function was reserved for the overseers, and what belonged to the deacons. It is only when we come to the middle of the second century that we find any clear statement on this point. In the first apology of Justin Martyr we read: "There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. And he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive those things at His hands. . . . And when the president has given thanks, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and the wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion. And this food is called the Eucharist. . . . Likewise we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."² The deacon's duty is to distribute communion; the consecration of the bread and wine is reserved to the "president" (προεστῶς). The overseers and deacons likewise exercise, according to the *Didache*, the ministry of the prophets and teachers. This ministry, as we have already pointed out, is the preaching of the word. The deacons,

¹ Cfr. 1 Cor. xi. 21.

² 1 Apol. 65, 66.

therefore, exercise a magisterial function, just as St. Stephen does at Jerusalem, or Philip in Samaria. Here again, the writer omits to record the division of labour ; we can only suppose that in this respect also the deacons assisted the overseers.

In his epistle to the Philippians, Polycarp writes : " In like manner, deacons should be blameless in the presence of His righteousness, as deacons of God and Christ, and not of men ; not calumniators, not double-tongued, not lovers of money, temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became a servant of all." And again : " It is right to abstain from all those things (carnal sins), submitting yourselves to the elders and deacons, as to God and Christ." The qualifications, " compassionate " and " diligent," and perhaps also " not lovers of money," are required with a view to the proper discharge of their duties as relieving-officers. The deacons, however, have other duties. They are the assistants of the elders in the maintenance of discipline ; hence the faithful are exhorted to submit themselves to the elders and deacons. It is for the same reason, probably, that the deacons must be blameless, not calumniators, not double-tongued. These qualifications harmonise exactly with the duties of the diaconate laid down in the Clementine writings : the deacons are to be the eyes and ears of the bishop.

The deacons fill an important place in the Ignatian epistles : " Those, likewise, who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must please all men in all ways. For they are not (merely) deacons of meats and drinks but servants of the Church of God. They must therefore beware of blame as of fire. In like manner, let all men respect the deacon as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as a type of the Father, and the elders as the council of God, and as the college of apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church."¹ These deacons evidently form part of the local hierarchy ; for their presence is required in the community, that it may be worthy of the name of a church. They have likewise, a claim to respect from all men ; for they

¹ Trall ii. and iii.

not only attend to the wants of the poor, but also assist in the dispensation of "the mysteries of Jesus Christ." This reference to the mysteries bears a close resemblance to a passage in St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians: "Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God."¹ Ignatius generally uses "mysteries" in the same wide sense of "doctrinal truths";² so that there is reference here to a magisterial, rather than a liturgical function of the deacons. Again, Ignatius says: "Respect the deacons as God's commandment."³ From the parallel passage,⁴ "be subject to the bishop as to the commandment," it appears that the writer urges respect for the deacons not as instituted by God, but as speaking with God's authority. The exhortation in question implies, therefore, in the deacons either a disciplinary or a magisterial authority. The deacons also assist the bishop and elders in the government of the church: "He that does anything without the bishop and elders and deacons is not clean in his conscience";⁵ and again: "I am devoted for those who are subject to the bishop, the elders and the deacons."⁶ The deacons, in all those cases, are assistants of the bishop and elders; as an order, they are inferior to the other two grades of the hierarchy. This is shown, not only by the order of enumeration, but also by the fact that Ignatius rejoices that the deacon Sotion is "subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbyteral college as to the law of Jesus Christ."⁷

The epistle of Clement tells us nothing of the diaconate, except the universality of the institution. Everywhere they preached, the apostles established their first-fruits overseers and deacons of those who should believe. This is the record of Clement, a record which, as we have already seen, is of the highest historical value. Clement's testimony is confirmed by the prominence given to the deacons in the *Didache* and in the Ignatian epistles. These documents show that, at the beginning of the second century, the diaconate was a well-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 1.

³ Smyr. viii.

² Trall. vii.

² Cfr. Eph. xii. xix.; Magn. ix.

⁴ Trall. xiii.; Cfr. 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

⁶ Polyc. vi.

⁷ Magn. ii.

known institution in every church. The *Didache* takes for granted their existence, wherever the Eucharist is celebrated. Ignatius accounts a church without deacons unworthy of the name. The close connection between overseers and deacons in all the early documents goes to show that wherever there were overseers, there were also deacons. We may, therefore, accept without hesitation the testimony of Clement, that the diaconate was an apostolic institution, and that it was practically coextensive with the Church from the earliest times.

It is not an easy matter to gauge the precise nature and extent of the deacon's duties in apostolic times. The difficulty arises, not only from the scantiness of the evidence, but also from the fact that the functions of the diaconate appear to have undergone considerable development before the end of the fourth century. From the passages already discussed, it seems most likely that the deacons assisted the overseers in all the episcopal functions, in discipline, teaching, liturgy and administration. St. Paul asks in the *Epistle to the Romans*: "How will they (any preachers) preach unless they are sent?" What was the nature of the mission of the deacons? Was it a portion of the ordinary authority of the diocese, or was it a delegation from the overseers? When a deacon preaches at the present day, he does so in virtue of authority delegated to him by the bishop. But it does not seem to have been so in the beginning. In the church of Jerusalem, the deacons were the first localised superiors. In this case they must have either held, to a certain extent, the ordinary jurisdiction of the church (or diocese), or they laboured with authority delegated by the apostles. St. Luke does not suggest the latter alternative. His whole record implies that they were appointed to a definite office in the community. The administrative difficulties were but the occasion of their appointment. With the imposition of hands they appear to have received orders and jurisdiction for their higher duties. The fact that the apostles requested the community to elect the candidates shows, I think, that they meant to establish an office, rather than appoint delegates; and the qualifications, "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom,"

show that this office included a magisterial function. After the election, the candidates were established in office by one act of ordination, with all the powers of orders and jurisdiction, required for the fulfilment of their duties. This seems to be the most natural interpretation of St. Luke's narrative.

When St. Paul ordained and appointed elders over a newly-established community, he did not regard them as merely his delegates. He set up the machinery, so to speak; the jurisdiction came direct from God. Hence he says: "Attend to the flock in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers." Now, when Clement tells us that the apostles established their first-fruits overseers and deacons in all the churches, we may presume that he understands the institution, as St. Paul understood it. Yet, in the same passage he combines overseers and deacons, without giving us the least hint that the authority of one differed in principle from the authority of the other. From a comparison of the teaching of Paul and Clement, it seems to follow that the apostle might have truly said to the deacons: "Attend to the flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you deacons." This idea, strange as it may seem, finds an echo in the epistle of Polycarp: "Deacons should be blameless in the presence of His righteousness, as deacons of God and Christ, and not of men." He adds in the same paragraph: "Wherefore, it is right to abstain from all these things, submitting yourselves to the elders and deacons, as to God and Christ." This last remark seems to imply that the deacons held some kind of ordinary jurisdiction. If the deacons, in the exercise of their authority, were merely delegates of the overseers (or the bishop), Polycarp could scarcely have said: "deacons of God and not of men." He should rather have said: "deacons of God as well as of men."

The overseers and deacons of the *Didache* exercise in their own community the ministry of the prophets and teachers. The writer evidently believes that the office of the deacon, no less than that of the overseer, implies a magisterial function. There can be no question of a delegation of authority by the overseers, for the two offices are mentioned on precisely the same terms. The community elects both overseers and

deacons ; the same qualifications are required ; and all exercise, within the local Church, the ministry of the prophets and teachers. The writer seems to contemplate a diaconal jurisdiction, the same in kind as the jurisdiction of the overseers. It is not contended here that the argument from the *Didache* or any of the passages we have just considered gives us anything like a certain conclusion. The writers of these early documents probably never considered the distinction between ordinary and delegated jurisdiction. The most we can hope to obtain, therefore, is a probable conjecture of what was uppermost in the minds of the primitive ecclesiastical organisers.

The apostles seem to have established a graduated hierarchy in each church, a hierarchy composed of at least two grades, overseers and deacons. In this hierarchy the diaconate was a subordinate office. The overseers held the ordinary jurisdiction of the local church, subject to the authority of the apostles and their delegates. The deacons participated in the same jurisdiction to a lesser extent, and were subject to both the apostles and the overseers. This subordination of the deacon explains, I think, why the deacons of Jerusalem, if such existed, did not sign the decrees of the council. They were not the supreme local teachers, the representatives and pastors of the church *par excellence*. The Catholic view of the apostolic authority presents us with a good analogy of the condition of things here contemplated. St. Peter enjoyed full apostolic jurisdiction to bind and loose all the faithful. The other apostles held the same power of binding and loosing ; and they held it direct from God : yet St. Peter enjoyed a real primacy. In other words, Christians fell under two jurisdictions, one of which was subordinate to, but not merely delegated by the other. A similar state of things appears to have existed on a smaller scale in each local community in apostolic times. There is this disparity, however, between the two cases ; that, whereas the apostles held the power to bind and loose in its fulness, subject only to the claims of the primate, the deacons, in all probability, never held in its fulness the ordinary jurisdiction of the diocese.

NOTE ON THE RELATION OF OVERSEERS AND ELDERS.

For many centuries the word ἐπίσκοπος in ecclesiastical language has meant "bishop," and the word πρεσβύτερος has meant "priest." The usage of the Church, from the time of Ignatius Martyr to the present day, would certainly lead us to suppose that the "overseers" of apostolic times were different from, and superior to the "elders," were it not that strong historical evidence bids us pause. From a study of the documents, as well as from the authority of early commentators, we are forced to the conclusion that the elders of the New Testament are identical with the overseers. We are led to this conclusion because the titles "elder" and "overseer" are applied indiscriminately to the same persons; the same functions are attributed to elders and overseers; and there is nowhere a joint enumeration of the two orders in apostolic times.

When St. Paul was returning from Europe after his second apostolic journey, he called at Miletus, and sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus: "Sending from Miletus to Ephesus, he called *the elders* of the church. But when they had come before him, he said to them: you (ὁμεῖς emphatic) know how I was with you all the time from the first day on which I came into Asia. . . . For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Attend, therefore, to yourselves and to the whole flock in which the Holy Ghost has placed you *overseers* to shepherd the church of the Lord." Here the elders and overseers are evidently the same individuals. St. Paul sends for the *elders*; when they arrive he addresses them with an emphatic vocative "*You*." Continuing the discourse thus introduced he calls these same superiors the *overseers* of the church. There is no ground for supposing a transition or change of audience; on the contrary, the emphatic "*you*," with which the apostle begins, the continuous nature of the discourse, and the logical connection—attend *therefore* to yourselves and to the flock—all show clearly that the same audience is addressed throughout the discourse. St. Paul distinguishes two classes in the church, the flock and the shepherds. No metaphor is more frequently used in the primitive documents to express the relation of the office-bearers to the faithful. It is a useful figure for Catholic scholars; for it removes the ambiguity arising

out of the antithesis between "elder" and "younger" members of the community. In the passage before us, it is clear that St. Paul is addressing the office-bearers; and these superiors are called elders and overseers. Professor Harnack thinks that the overseers, though different from the elders, were ranked among them; so that *some of the elders* could be called overseers. The passage before us does not harmonise with this theory. St. Paul sent for *the elders* of Ephesus; he addresses them all, and applies to all the title "overseers." All the elders are overseers; the same shepherds have two distinct titles.

We can deduce a similar argument from the *Epistle to Titus*: "For this reason I left thee in Crete . . . that thou mightst establish *elders* in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is without crime, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not riotous or unruly. *For the overseer* must be without crime, as the steward of God, not proud, not angry, etc." Wishing to point out to Titus the qualifications necessary in candidates for the *presbyterate*, St. Paul gives a catalogue of the virtues required in an *overseer*. The argument would be pointless, unless the terms "*elder*" and "*overseer*" were interchangeable. Lest, however, there should be any doubt about the matter, the apostle introduces the transition by the logical particle "for." When appointing elders, Titus must look out for candidates without crime; "*for* (γάρ) *the overseer* must be without crime." The conjunction γάρ, and the repetition of the word ἀνέγκλητος (without crime) prove beyond doubt that the terms are here synonymous. Nor is this a purely Pauline view. St. Peter, in his first epistle, likewise identifies the elders and overseers: "I beseech thee elders, shepherd the flock that is among you, overseeing them (ἐπισκοποῦντες), not by constraint, but willingly." Here again, we have reference to the shepherds of the flock, and their ministry is described as "oversight," while their title is "elders." The same individuals are elders and overseers; and they fulfil their presbyteral functions by exercising the oversight.

The epistle of Clement of Rome furnishes another proof of the synonymous use of these two titles; his epistle is an apology for the divinely-given jurisdiction of these superiors: "It is shameful . . . that it should be reported that the very steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians, for the sake of one or two persons, makes sedition against its elders." And again: "Ye, therefore, that laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves to the elders." In proving his thesis, however, Clement uses, not the word "elders," but "overseers": "Christ was sent by God, the apostles

by Christ . . . and they, preaching through countries and cities, appointed their first-fruits overseers and deacons of those who should believe. Those, therefore, who were appointed by them . . . we consider unjustly cast out." There could be no point in an argument of this kind, unless the terms were interchangeable. To Clement's mind, therefore, the titles "elder" and "overseer" are synonymous. The same conclusion follows from Clement's secondary argument—worthy exercise of office. "It will be no light sin," he tells us, "if we thrust out those who offered the gifts of the overseer's office (ἐπισκοπή) blamelessly and holily. Blessed are those elders who have gone before, whose departure was fruitful and ripe, for they have no fear lest anyone should remove them from their appointed place. For we see that you have displaced certain persons, though they were living honourably, from the ministration which had been honoured by them blamelessly." Here again, the argument presupposes that the titles are synonymous. It is sinful to thrust out those who exercise the overseer's office blamelessly; the elders have fulfilled their ministration blamelessly; therefore, they are unjustly cast out. In the sarcastic remark: "Blessed are those elders who have gone before, for they have no fear of being removed," there is obviously an antithesis to the preceding sentence, where there is question of thrusting out from the overseer's office. Those who are called "elders" evidently hold the office which is called ἐπισκοπή.

In the light of these passages, we can explain an otherwise difficult problem in the first epistle to Timothy. In the third chapter of this letter, St. Paul deals with the virtues required in overseers and deacons, making no mention of elders. The qualifications required in an overseer correspond exactly to those required in the elder-overseers of Crete. In each case the candidate must be blameless, a man of one wife, having his children well under correction; capable of teaching; not given to wine, or money; not proud or passionate, but sober, meek, humble and self-controlled. St. Paul then goes on to speak of the virtues of deacons, and of certain women, who hold an official position in the community. He evidently means to deal with all the officers of the church. He concludes his remarks with the words, "Hoping to come to you soon, I write these things to you, that if I am delayed you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God." The absence of reference to the virtues of the elders in such circumstances, and the similarity of the catalogues of virtues laid down for the elders and for the overseers, in the epistles to Titus and Timothy respectively,

show that the elders must be here included under the title "overseers." This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that when the apostle comes to deal, in a subsequent chapter, with the honour due to ecclesiastical superiors, he speaks only of elders, omitting all reference to the overseers. The elders are worthy of honour, because they are the rulers and teachers of the flock—functions which are the exact counterpart of the virtues already required in overseers. The overseers ought, therefore, to be entitled to the same honour as the elders, since they exercise the same honourable functions. How, then, are we to explain the fact that St. Paul omits to mention, on the one hand, the presbyteral virtues, and on the other, the honour due to overseers? The elders and overseers are not distinct classes; there is but one order, with two distinct titles. It is in the same way that we must explain the fact of enumeration, which meets us in the earliest Christian documents. Overseers and elders were already well known in the Church; they are frequently mentioned in apostolic and sub-apostolic literature; yet they are never enumerated *together* till the time of Ignatius. Again and again, we meet the combination "overseers and deacons," but never "overseers and elders," or "overseers, elders and deacons." When we study the history of the *Acts*, and the epistles of St. Paul, this fact becomes inexplicable, unless the overseers and elders are identical. There are so many passages where we naturally expect a complete grouping, and where we miss the elders from the enumeration, that it is unintelligible why the writer did not mention both overseers and elders, if they were really distinct.

It is unnecessary to quote in detail the teaching of the Fathers. From the earliest times to the Protestant Reformation, it was the almost unanimous teaching of ecclesiastical writers that the words "elders" and "overseers" are synonymous in the New Testament. The author of the Peshito Syriac Version of the New Testament actually translates the title *ἐπίσκοπος* by the word for "elder." The writings of Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodoret and others, show that he was but voicing the opinion of the Church. We are not concerned here with the question as to how far the early Christians knew of two grades of the hierarchy, corresponding to our present episcopate and presbyterate. The authorities we have quoted merely testify to the historical fact, that the overseers in apostolic times were the elders, and *vice versa*.

CHAPTER VI.—TRADITION AND SUCCESSION.

CHRISTIANITY, as we have already observed, did not start out as a philosophy or a wisdom merely. The Gospel is put before us in the New Testament as a *catachesis*—a body of truths to be handed down, and accepted on authority. “We had confidence in God,” says St. Paul, “to speak to you the Gospel of God in much carefulness Therefore, we also give thanks without ceasing, because when you received from us the Gospel of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but, as it is indeed, the word of God.”¹ The Gospel is preached as a divine message; and the reception of it implies an act of obedience: “Thanks be to God, because (though) you were the slaves of sin, you submitted from your heart unto the form of teaching which you received (*εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς*).” St. Paul’s theory of Christian teaching can be summed up in these two words “transmission” and “instruction.”² The apostle teaches what he himself has learned; and his converts must preserve the doctrine just as they receive it: “I make known to you, brethren, the doctrine which I preached to you, which also you received, and in which you stand; by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”³

St. Paul acknowledges the existence of inspired teachers other than the apostles; but their teaching must be always checked by apostolic tradition: “If anyone preaches to you a gospel other than that which you have received, let him be anathema.”⁴ And again: “If any man seems to be a prophet, let him know the things that I write, that they are the commandment of God.”⁵ Not even the apostle himself,

¹ 1 Thess. ii.² *παράδοσις* and *διδαχή*.³ 1 Cor. xv.⁴ Gal. i. 9.⁵ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

nor an angel from heaven, can cancel the message he has handed down : " Though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." A few years later, we find the author of the *Didache* prescribing the same rule of faith for his readers : " Whoever shall come and teach you all those things that have been said before, receive him ; but if the teacher himself be perverted, and teach a different doctrine to the destruction thereof, do not listen to him." ¹ He might well have added, with St. Paul : " Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by epistle of ours." ² The world was just then agitated by conflicting sects and systems; the union of Jewish theology with Greek philosophy had opened the door to endless disputes and speculations ; and every school held out to its disciples vain promises of a superior " gnosis." St. Paul recognised the uncertainty and confusion to which the faithful were exposed ; and he is never tired of warning his disciples against the useless genealogies and vain babblings, proposed by seducers in the name of knowledge. Faith and certainty can only be found in obedience to the Gospel ; for the word of God alone has the seal of authority : " Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." ³

The idea of a deposit comes into evidence most strongly in the pastoral epistles. St. Paul thus charges his disciple : " O Timothy, guard the deposit, turning away from the profane babblings and opposition of knowledge falsely so called." ⁴ And again : " Hold fast the form of sound words which you heard from me, in the faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The good deposit guard, through the Holy Ghost who dwells in us." ⁵ Fitness to teach implies, not only a knowledge of the truths, but also a divine mission. Before a man can propose the Gospel message with authority, before he can claim submission to his teaching, he must be God's ambassador : " How shall they believe Him of whom they

¹ Did. xi.² 2 Thess. ii. 14.³ Rom. x. 17.⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 20.⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 1.

have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent?"¹ We have already seen that the ministry of the word was one of an overseer's chief duties. The overseer must be a man who "holds the faithful word according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound teaching, and refute those who contradict . . . For there are many who are disobedient vain-talkers and seducers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be reproved." The fact that the overseer must reprove these "disobedient" vain-talkers,² shows that he speaks with authority; he must be of those faithful men to whom Timothy is exhorted to hand down the deposit.

The theory of a deposit and of a magisterial mission is only part of the general plan of Christianity. Doctrine, sacraments, pastoral and sacerdotal power, all come from Christ through the apostles. The idea of transmission meets us everywhere.

Clement's condemnation of the Corinthian schism is based on the apostolic succession of the hierarchy: "The apostles received the Gospel for us from Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent from God. So, then, Christ is from God, and the apostles from Christ. . . . So preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be overseers and deacons unto those that should believe. . . . Our apostles knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the name of the overseer's office. For this reason, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards provided a continuance,³ that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Those, therefore, who were appointed by them, or by other men of repute with the consent of the whole church, and who have ministered blamelessly to the flock of Christ . . . these we consider to be unjustly thrown out from their ministry. For it will be no

¹ Rom. x. 14.

² Tit. i.

³ Or "made an additional regulation." It is not quite certain whether the correct reading is *ἐπιμονήν* or *ἐπινομήν*.

light sin if we thrust out those, who have offered the gifts of the overseer's office blamelessly and holily. Blessed are those elders who have gone before, since their departure (from life) was fruitful and ripe; for they have no fear lest anyone should remove them from their appointed place."¹ The elders preach the Gospel, rule the church, and exercise their liturgical ministry, in virtue of powers handed down by the apostles. God sent Christ; Christ sent the apostles; the apostles appointed the elders. Not satisfied with this appointment, the apostles also provided a continuance of the ministry, by arranging for the succession of other approved men to those whom they themselves had appointed. It is interesting to note that the apostles transmitted, not only the Gospel—"The apostles received the Gospel from Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent from God"—but also the power to rule, and the power to minister, especially by offering the gifts. These various powers are handed down to the third generation by "men of repute," in accordance with arrangements made by the apostles. The elders appointed by these men of repute appear to be equal in every respect to those established by the apostles themselves. They have the same "appointed place," the same claim to obedience, the same right to exercise their ministrations.

Apostolic succession is not the invention of Clement. The same principle is in evidence in the New Testament. The appointment of the seven at Jerusalem is the exact counterpart of the Corinthian ordinations. Clement presupposes that the elders are first elected by the whole church,² and then appointed to office by the apostles or "other men of repute." At Jerusalem the community is exhorted by the apostles to "seek out seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom *we* may set over this work." The multitude elected seven men: "These they set before the apostles; and they, having prayed, laid their hands upon them."³ In the churches founded by Paul and Barnabas, the elders are

¹ Clement to Cor. Ch. 44.

² "Those who were appointed by them, or afterwards by other men of repute, *with the consent of the whole church*," cannot be justly expelled from office.

³ Acts vi.

likewise appointed by these apostles: "But when they had appointed for them elders in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."¹ As in the epistle of Clement, so in the New Testament, *immediate* appointment by the apostles is not essential for true apostolic succession. The apostles can provide for the wants of a church through "other men of repute." Hence St. Paul sends Titus to Crete, "to set in order the things that are wanting, and to establish elders in every city, as I gave thee charge."² He likewise explains for Timothy the qualifications necessary in candidates for the episcopate; and he adds in the same epistle: "Be not hasty to impose hands on any man."

What was the significance of this imposition of hands? We find the same ceremony employed by Jesus on many occasions during His public life. The evangelists are careful to add in each case the end and circumstances of His action. Our Lord sometimes imposes hands with a view to healing the sick or diseased: "And when the sun had set, all those that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to Him; but He, laying His hands on each of them, healed them."³ Again, the ceremony is used as a symbol of benediction: "There were little children presented to Him, that He might impose hands upon them, and pray . . . and when He had laid His hands on them, He departed thence."⁴ In the parallel passage, St. Mark says: "He embraced them; and laying His hands on them, He blessed them." In all these cases we find the same idea of a transmission of some invisible effect. The imposition of hands is the channel, through which an invisible power goes out from Jesus.⁵ This ceremony was also known in the Old Testament. The law of Moses prescribed that the priest should lay his hands on the head of the animal he was to sacrifice. The priest thereby acknowledged God's supreme dominion over human life, and marked the substitution of the animal's life for the life of man. The rite, by which Moses appointed Joshua his successor, comes much nearer to the Christian ceremony: "And

¹ Acts xiv. 22.² Tit. i.; 1 Tim iii. v. 22.³ Luk. iv. 40.⁴ Matt. xix. 13-15; Mark x. 16.⁵ Cfr. Luk. vi. 19.

Moses did as the Lord commanded him ; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the people ; and laying his hand upon him, he repeated all things that the Lord had commanded."¹ Moses had forfeited the privilege of leading the people into the promised land ; the imposition of hands symbolised the transmission of his authority to Joshua.

The Christian rite was probably suggested by this passage in the Old Testament. History testifies that, from the beginning, the imposition of hands was adopted and consecrated by the apostles, to signify the transmission of supernatural gifts. The ceremony had at least two distinct uses in apostolic times. It was employed, in the first place, to invoke the Holy Ghost and His gifts on those who had received baptism. In consideration of man's natural desire to represent things invisible by things visible, Jesus had raised the material rite of ablution to the status of a spiritual sacrament, for the internal cleansing of the soul. The same consideration called into existence a material ceremony to signify the perfecting of the faithful, by the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. When the faithful were scattered by the first persecution, Philip the deacon went down to Samaria, and there preached the Gospel : "Now, when the apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John ; who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost ; for He was not yet come on any of them ; but they were only baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."² Prayer accompanies the imposition of hands, to define the end for which the ceremony is employed : "They prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." St. Luke's record establishes the most intimate connection between the rite and the gift. The imposition of hands is not a mere ceremony, but the channel through which the gift is transmitted. The causal connection appears still more clearly from the words which follow :

¹ Numb. xxvii. 22. 23.

² Acts viii.

"And when Simon saw that by the imposition of hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: 'Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost.'" The gift is bestowed by means of the imposition of hands. It is worth noting that not every Christian has power to exercise this function. Simon believed and was baptized; he also received imposition of hands; nevertheless, he was unable, as his request shows, to confer the Holy Ghost. The apostles alone were capable of conferring this gift; and they alone, as the words of Simon prove, were capable of transmitting the power to confer it. Even Philip, deacon and evangelist though he was, could not complete the work he had begun. Confirmation of the faithful was reserved to the apostles; this was the motive of their visit to Samaria—a visit which was not accidental, but the considered outcome of a consultation at Jerusalem.

On another occasion, we find St. Paul exercising this same function: "And it came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus and found certain disciples. And he said to them: have you received the Holy Ghost? But they replied: we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Ghost. . . . Having heard these things, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."¹ St. Paul's first question to these disciples implies that the Holy Ghost is given by a visible action; for the form of his question² shows that he refers to an event which happened at a definite point in past time; whereas the presence of the Holy Ghost is continuous. That action is evidently the imposition of hands, for it is by this ceremony that St. Paul proceeds to supply the gift that is wanting. St. Luke is careful to tell us that it was Paul who imposed hands, though he does not think it worth while to mention the minister of baptism. Here, as in the former passage, it is implied that a special power is required to confer the Holy Ghost.

¹ Acts. xix.

² εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε.

In the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, we read : " Wherefore leaving the elementary ¹ truths of Christ, let us go on to more perfect things; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith unto God, of the teaching of baptisms, of imposition of hands, of a resurrection from the dead, and of an eternal judgment." ² Its association with baptism shows that the imposition of hands here mentioned is that by which the Holy Ghost is conferred. The fact that this ceremony is one of the first things preached to a community, and that it is set down, with baptism and the resurrection, among the most elementary truths of Christianity, affords ample proof that it was universally known and received by Christians. The church, therefore, from the beginning used a ceremony of imposition of hands, which was the complement of baptism; which had for its object the giving of the Holy Ghost; and the exercise of which was reserved to the apostles, or at least the higher grades of the hierarchy.

Hands were also imposed by the apostles for another purpose, namely, to transmit their own spiritual powers in whole or in part to other ecclesiastical superiors. For some time after the foundation of the Church, the apostles were the only Christian pastors; they alone governed the Church, and exercised the liturgical functions. With the spread of the Gospel, however, a division of labour became necessary; the complaints of the Hellenist Jews brought the matter to a head; and seven deacons were appointed at Jerusalem. St. Luke's narrative makes it clear that "the seven" were not merely out-door-relieving officers. An administrative difficulty was the occasion of their appointment; but the apostles availed of this occasion to institute a sacred order, which would relieve them of their less important cares. Two distinct facts are mentioned in connection with this appointment: the first is a popular election; the second is the action of the apostles. That the latter alone constituted the essence of the ordination is plain from the words "Seek ye seven men . . . whom we may set over this work." The community merely presents the candidates; the apostles

¹ Literally "the word of the beginning of Christ."

² Hebrews. vi. 2.

set them over the work. A few verses later, St. Luke specifies the rite by which the seven were promoted to office : "These they set before the apostles ; and they praying imposed hands on them." As in the case of confirmation, so in ordination the imposition of hands is the consecrating action ; but prayer accompanies the ceremony in each case, to define the end for which it is employed. St. Luke immediately proceeds to tell us that the word of the Lord increased ; that Stephen wrought great signs and wonders among the people ; and that the Jews were unable to withstand the Spirit and the wisdom with which he spoke. The connection between these facts and the appointment of the seven can hardly be accidental. St. Luke seems to imply that the imposition of hands conferred on Stephen an invisible power, which he had not hitherto possessed. In the words of the gospel, he now "spoke as one having authority."

The necessity and importance of the imposition of hands, as the door to ecclesiastical office, can be gathered from the ordination of Paul and Barnabas : "There were in the church of Antioch prophets and doctors, Barnabas, and Simon surnamed Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenean, and Manahen, the foster-brother of the tetrarch Herod, and Saul. But while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them : 'Separate Me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them.' Then fasting and praying and imposing hands on them, they sent them away."¹ St. Paul tells us that he was called to be an apostle by Christ Himself. The Holy Ghost bears witness to his claims, for the word *προσκέκλημαι* shows that both Paul and Barnabas were already called. What, then, did they receive by the imposition of hands? A comparison with the proceedings discussed in the last paragraph will help us to realise the situation. The community at Jerusalem elected seven candidates and presented them to the apostles ; the latter ordained them to office by the imposition of hands. Here the election is not the work of the community,²

¹ Acts xiii.

² It could not have been the work of the community, since the mission of Paul and Barnabas was unlocalised.

but of God Himself¹; yet the Holy Ghost is pleased to present the candidates to human superiors, to have them separated, that is, actually ordained or appointed, for the work to which He has called them. St. Luke immediately explains the nature of this work: "These, *therefore* (*οὖν*), having been sent by the Holy Ghost, came into Selucia, and thence sailed to Cyprus. And when they had come to Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." These words introduce the history of the first apostolic journey, during which Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel, founded churches, and established elders throughout Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. This was evidently the work for which they were separated.

St. Paul had already preached, no doubt, at Damascus and Antioch; but he had nowhere founded churches, appointed elders, imposed hands. For the preaching of the Gospel a divine mission is necessary: "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" St. Paul had already received this mission; he had been called to proclaim the Gospel with authority. Writing to the Galatians, he says: "Paul an apostle, not from men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." His apostolic calling was not of human origin (*ἀπό*), neither did it come to him through human instrumentality (*διὰ*); but it came through and from Jesus Christ. It was not authority that he received by the imposition of hands; it was rather the power of orders. He was henceforth in a position to build on his own foundation, to establish new churches, to ordain elders for the communities which he founded. This appears to have been the power he received at Antioch; this was the mission on which he set out in consequence of (*οὖν*) his consecration.²

¹ Cfr. 1. Tim. i. 18. iv. 14 where Timothy appears to have been pointed out by prophecy (*i.e.* by the Holy Ghost) as a suitable candidate for office. Also Clement and Alexandria: "When John went from Patmos to Ephesus his custom was to visit the neighbouring regions . . . to ordain some of those marked out by the Spirit" (Apud Eusebius iii. 23).

² Even if we suppose that St. Paul already possessed all the powers of the apostolate, the necessity and importance of ordination is evident from the fact, that, even in this case, the prophets and doctors were anxious to confer the usual rite of imposition of hands (accompanied by prayer). The solemnity of the event, marked by the observance of a fast, shows that the imposition of hands was not merely a farewell ceremony, as some writers maintain.

One who had not been directly called by God would have received both order and jurisdiction. This is apparently what happened at the ordination of the seven; though the orders and jurisdiction transmitted in this case were both limited.

Having proceeded as far as Derbe on their first apostolic journey, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. St. Luke tells us that, on their return journey, "they confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the faith. . . . And when they had constituted for them elders with prayer and fasting in every church they commended them to the Lord."¹ St. Luke's chief object is to relate, not the manner, but the fact of appointment. The prophets and teachers at Antioch, "praying and fasting," imposed hands on Paul and Barnabas, a short time before. Now, these apostles, in turn, "praying and fasting, constituted elders in all the churches." They evidently "constituted" them by imposition of hands; for the same subsidiary ceremonies accompany the ordination in both cases. As Paul and Barnabas had been themselves consecrated in this manner, and as Barnabas had seen the seven promoted by the same ceremony, we should expect that they would ordain others by imposition of hands. This presumption is confirmed by the fact that St. Paul afterwards ordained Timothy by imposition of hands, and instructed him to employ the same ceremony in the ordination of others.² The actual word used by St. Luke is *χειροτονήσαντες*. *Χειροτονεῖν* literally means to stretch out the hands; hence its applied meaning "to elect," because elections were frequently carried out by a show of hands. When nomination began to take the place of election, *χειροτονεῖν* was used to signify any authoritative appointment; for instance, the appointment of an official by the emperor.³ It is in a sense akin to this that St. Luke uses the word in an earlier chapter of the Acts.⁴ In the passage before us, the word cannot have its ordinary current meaning "to elect"; for the subject of the sentence is "Paul and

¹ *Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβύτερους.* Acts xiv. 22.

² 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. v. 22. ³ Cfr. Beelin on Acts.

⁴ Acts x. 41. God manifested the risen Jesus, "not to all the people but to foreordained witnesses."

Barnabas." This is plain both from the text and the context. It must rather approach the idea of nomination. Paul and Barnabas constituted elders, therefore, as we might suppose the emperor to appoint civil officials. They acted on their own initiative, and on their own authority. They "confirmed the faithful, constituted elders *for them*, and commended them to the Lord."

Dr. Lindsay, speaking from the Presbyterian point of view, tells us that the word suggests "that Paul and Barnabas followed the example of their brethren at Jerusalem, and suggested and superintended an election of office-bearers." The passage, in his opinion, means merely that Paul and Barnabas *saw* elders elected in all the churches. Similarly, when Titus was left in Crete, "his duty was to *see* that elders were chosen in every local church." Lindsay's rendering is a convenient way out of a difficulty; it gets him away from orders and apostolic succession; but it also gets him away from the text of the Bible. St. Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabas "confirmed the faithful, appointed elders *for them* (*αὐτοῖς*), and commended them to the Lord"; Dr. Lindsay tells us that it was the congregation that appointed the elders, and that Paul and Barnabas merely suggested and superintended the election. He does not explain how this meaning can be given to *χειροτονήσαντες*; or how, when given, it can be harmonised with the rest of the passage. We have already discussed the appointment of "the seven" at Jerusalem. Dr. Lindsay seems to take no account of the words, "Seek ye seven men . . . whom *we may set over* this work."

We learn from the pastoral epistles that Timothy received his *χάρισμα* by the imposition of hands; and the charismata, as we know, were considered the special gift of the Holy Ghost. Timothy, in turn, is to use the same ceremony in the ordination of others: "Be not hasty to impose hands on any man." These facts throw some light on St. Paul's discourse at Miletus. The apostle says: "Attend to yourselves and to the flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers." As the elders were ordained in the same church (Ephesus) by imposition of hands, a few years later, we may presume that St. Paul

here refers to the same ceremony. The use of the word *ἔθετο*, in the aorist, shows that he refers to an event which took place at a definite point in past time. The chief action in question is attributed to the Holy Ghost. Now, ordination by imposition of hands harmonises exactly with these data. The *χάρισμα* of ordination is attributable in a special manner to the Holy Ghost; and the ordinary means of conferring the Holy Ghost, as we have already seen, is the imposition of hands. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how the establishment of the elders can be called the work of the Holy Ghost on any other hypothesis. St. Paul does not confuse confirmation and orders. Imposition of hands was employed in both, to signify the giving of the Holy Spirit; but the prayers, which formed an integral part of the rite, defined in each case the nature of the effects for which the Holy Ghost was invoked. From the fact that Timothy was appointed to office by the imposition of hands, we may reasonably conclude that his fellow-disciple, Titus, was ordained by St. Paul in the same manner. Similarly the warning, "Be not hasty to impose hands on anyone," must be taken as representing the charge of Titus in Crete, as well as of Timothy at Ephesus.

As far as we can trace the appointment to ecclesiastical office in apostolic times, we find everywhere the same theory. All power comes from Christ by transmission; and the instrument of transmission is imposition of hands. With the exception of the prophets and teachers of Antioch, about whose official status we have no evidence,¹ we find no one imposing hands on another, unless he has been himself ordained by the same ceremony. Those who already hold office² are alone capable of initiating others into the ranks of the hierarchy. We find this reservation as a fact in the New Testament; we find it as a dogma in the early patristic literature. The prophets or teachers impose hands on Paul and Barnabas at Antioch; these, in turn, ordain elders in all the churches. St. Paul imposes hands on Timothy, that he may consecrate other

¹ For a discussion of the position held by these ordaining prelates, see below ch. x.

² Even some of the office-bearers, for instance the deacons, are incapable of imposing hands sacramentally. Cfr. Acts. viii. 14 seq.

ecclesiastical officers. The *Canons of Hippolytus*, *Clementine literature*, *Apostolic Constitutions* and *De Aleatoribus*, all testify, for different parts of the Church, to ordination by imposition of hands. The great scriptural scholars, Chrysostom, Jerome and Theodoret are equally clear. During the first two or three centuries, the choice of candidates was frequently intrusted to the congregations; but the actual transmission of the power of orders always came, as in the case of the seven, from the apostles, or other superiors constituted in authority. Election, to use a well-known formula, may be from below, but ordination must be from above.

Dr. Hatch¹ has searched the works of the Fathers for evidence calculated to weaken this testimony. The results of his efforts are worth quoting: "Two points have to be considered, first, the existence of the rite, and secondly its significance. In regard to the first of these points, there is the remarkable fact that the passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions* which describes with elaborate minuteness the other ceremonies, with which a bishop was admitted to office, says nothing of this (imposition of hands) . . . nor is the rite mentioned in the enumeration which Cyprian gives of the elements which had combined to make the election of Cornelius valid. . . . In entire harmony with this is the account which Jerome gives of the admission to office of the bishop of Alexandria. After the election, the presbyters conduct the elected bishop to the chair; he is thereupon bishop *de facto*. It follows from this that the rite was not universal: it is impossible that, if it was not universal, it can have been regarded as essential."

Dr. Hatch first appeals to the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. This section of the *Constitutions* cannot be earlier than the fourth century, for it is based to a large extent on the *Canons of Hippolytus*. Now, we have abundant evidence from the fourth century to prove that ecclesiastical superiors were ordained by imposition of hands, and that the ceremony was called *χειροτονία*. Let us see what evidence the *Constitutions* furnish to the contrary. The passage referred to runs as follows: "And silence being made, let one of the principal

¹Op. cit. lecture v.

bishops, together with two others, stand near the altar, the rest of the bishops and presbyters praying silently, and the deacons holding the divine gospels on the head of him who is ordained (χειροτονουμένον); and let them say to God thus: O Lord . . . Amen. And, after the prayer, let one of the bishops elevate the sacrifice upon the hands of him that is ordained, and let him be placed on his throne, in a place set apart for him among the rest of the bishops, they all giving him the kiss of peace.”¹ The passage is not so elaborately minute, after all. We are not told what is the purpose of choosing one of the principal bishops, who with two others shall stand apart from the rest and pray to God: “Do Thou *by us* pour down the influence of Thy Spirit,” on him who is ordained. If Dr. Hatch had turned over a few pages farther, he could have seen the reason for these prescriptions: “For ye undoubtedly know that these that are by us named *bishops* and presbyters and deacons, were established by prayer and the imposition of hands (εὐχῇ καὶ χειρῶν ἐπιθέσει); and that by the difference of their names is shown the difference of their employments.”² Had he noticed in the section, from which he takes his argument, that presbyters and deacons are ordained by imposition of hands, he might have concluded *a fortiori* that the ceremony was used in the consecration of bishops. Had he examined the *Canons of Hippolytus*, on which the whole passage is chiefly based, he would have found explicit testimony even for the consecration of bishops. But it is quite unnecessary to have recourse to these arguments. In the passage before us, the bishop is spoken of as χειροτονουμένον. Now, in the fourth century this word signified, not merely “to admit to office,” as Hatch translates, but to admit to office by imposition of hands. This is clear from the writings of men who must have been contemporaries with the compiler of this section of the *Constitutions*. Basil,³ Chrysostom,⁴ Jerome⁵

¹ Apos. Const. viii. 4-5.

² *ib.* viii. 46.

³ Basil Ep. 188. ἔσχον τὰς χειροτονίας, καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν εἶχον τὸ χάρισμα.

⁴ “This is χειροτονία. The hand of the man is placed on the other.” Hom. xiv. 3 in Act.

⁵ “Ordinatio clericorum quae non solum ad imprecationem vocis, sed ad impositionem impletur manus.” In Isaiam viii. 10.

and others make χειροτονία equivalent to ἐπίθεσις τῶν χειρῶν. The absence of a more explicit reference in the *Constitutions* to this important action is due to the fact that the writer takes it for granted. The same phenomenon meets us in the early Roman sacramentaries; the mention of imposition of hands, whether for ordination, confirmation or other purposes, is frequently omitted, though it is quite certain that the rite was employed in the actual administration of these sacraments. As the "remarkable fact" mentioned by Hatch is not really a fact at all, it is scarcely necessary to point out that the argument based on it is not conclusive.

Dr. Hatch's next appeal is to the controversy between Cornelius and Novatian. Now, we have the testimony of Cornelius himself that Novatian had himself consecrated bishop by imposition of hands: "When these (bishops) had come, being but simple and plain in discerning the artifices and villany of the wicked . . . they forced them by a shadowy and empty imposition of hands to confer the episcopate upon him."¹ The imposition of hands evidently constituted the rite of consecration; but in this case it was shadowy and vain because the consecrating bishops were forced to impose hands, when "heated with wine and surfeiting." We have also the testimony of Cornelius that the presbyter Maximus repented of the schismatical act, of which he had been guilty. The crime in question consisted in "allowing hands to be imposed on him unto the episcopate," while the lawful bishop Cornelius was still alive.² Now, if Cornelius knew that consecration was given by imposition of hands, are we to suppose with Dr. Hatch that it was omitted at the consecration of Cornelius himself? Hatch quotes Cyprian to the effect that "Cornelius was made bishop by the judgment of God and Christ, by the testimony of all the clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were then present, and by the assembly of ancient priests and good men, when no one had been made so before him, when the place of Fabian, that is, the place of Peter, and the degree of the sacerdotal throne was vacant." He does not tell us that

¹ Cornelius apud Euseb. vi. 43.

² "Ut pateretur ei manum quasi in episcopatum imponi." Cyprian Ep. 45 (Oxford Ed. 49).

all these facts are quoted by Cyprian to prove that the election of Cornelius was canonical and lawful; he does not draw attention to the fact that it was "*de judicio Dei, de clericorum testimonio, de plebis suffragio*" that Cornelius was promoted. But, in the very sentence before, Cyprian says: "And he was made bishop by many of our colleagues, who were then present in the city of Rome."¹ Cornelius was consecrated bishop by other bishops, after a canonical election by the presbyters and people; and the rite of consecration consisted in the imposition of hands, as in the case of Novatian and Maximus.

We next come to the testimony of St. Jerome. The bishop-elect of Alexandria, we are told, needed no imposition of hands to instal him in office, when he was selected from among the presbyters. At least, this system prevailed up to the time of Heracleas and Dionysius. But, when Dr. Hatch concludes that imposition of hands formed no part of the episcopal consecration, he does violence to the letter which he quotes. St. Jerome, knowing that this ceremony was essential for every valid ordination, quotes the Alexandrian procedure to show that bishops and presbyters were originally the same. The letter proves therefore, if it proves anything, that the promotion of the Alexandrian bishop did not imply any ordination. It was only "as a remedy for schism, one was selected and placed over the others, lest each, by drawing after him a portion of the flock, should divide the church of Christ." At Alexandria, he continues, "from the time of Mark down to Heracleas and Dionysius, the presbyters nominated as bishop, one elected from themselves, as an army elects the commander or the deacons their archdeacon." Why does St. Jerome specify the time? Because *in the beginning*, as he tells us, presbyters and bishops were the same; the presbyters receiving at their ordination the power of orders in its fulness. At that ordination, which included both presbyteral and episcopal consecration, imposition of hands was the essential feature: "*Ordinatio clericorum, que non solum ad imprecationem vocis, sed ad*

¹ "Factus est episcopus a pluribus collegis." Cyprian Epis. 51. (Oxf. ed. 55).

impositionem impletur manus." St. Jerome, so far from supporting Dr. Hatch's theory, takes for granted the very truths which it denies. At a later stage we shall inquire into the historical value of these remarks of St. Jerome.

Having shattered the presumption on which the theory of ordination is based, Dr. Hatch goes on to show that, in the early church, the hierarchy possessed no "exceptional spiritual powers." "The conception of office," he tells us, "was one of order: by virtue of their appointment the officers of the Christian communities were entitled to perform functions, which in themselves were the functions of the whole church or of individual Christians." In other words, the christian superiors were the police force of the local church; their *raison d'être* was the convenience and order of the community; and they had no functions, except such as were delegated to them by the body of the faithful. The great proof of all this is the fact of silence: "The belief in the possession of exceptional spiritual powers is so important a fact, that it must needs assert itself . . . The fact that the writers of the first two centuries neither state nor imply it seems inexplicable, except on the supposition that they did not hold it." This fact, like another already referred to, exists only in Dr. Hatch's imagination. Though the extant literature of the first two centuries is very scanty, the documents that have come down to us bear unmistakable evidence of a belief in "exceptional spiritual powers."

In the epistle of Clement, the overseers clearly exercise a special ministration (λειτουργία), in virtue of a power handed down from Christ through the apostles and "other men of note." In the exercise of this ministration they are independent of the community; so that "it will be no light sin to displace them." It is one of their duties "to offer the gifts of the overseer's office blamelessly and holily." Does not the expression, "*gifts of the overseer's office*," prove that the overseers had a "special and exclusive power" to offer the Eucharist? If the ordinary faithful were equally capable of celebrating, as Hatch would have us believe, the gifts could not be called "*gifts of the overseer's office*," especially in a

context which deals with the special authority handed down to the overseers by the apostles. The whole passage implies that the apostles received from Christ, not only the Gospel, but also the power of ministering ; and that they handed down both to their successors in every church : " Christ is from God and the apostles from Christ . . . so, preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them in the spirit, to be overseers and deacons unto those who should (afterwards) believe." This was but a realisation of a state of things typified in the Old Testament ; for God required even in the old law, a fixed order in the Jewish sacrifices and ministrations : " Unto the high-priest his proper services have been assigned ; to the priests their proper office is appointed ; upon the Levites their proper ministrations are laid ; the layman is bound by the layman's ordinances." Clement could scarcely have expressed more clearly the theory of a transmitted ministry. On this theory is based his condemnation of the Corinthian schism. The elders or overseers are not merely the representatives of the people—if they were their deposition, though imprudent, could scarcely ¹ be called " unjust "—they hold an " appointed place," a jurisdiction and a *λειτουργία*, to which they are promoted, not by the faithful, but by the apostles, or by " other men of repute " in accordance with apostolic arrangements.

Clement here introduces very appropriately another example from the Old Testament : " When rivalry arose concerning the priesthood . . . he commanded the twelve princes of the tribes to bring him their rods. . . . The tribe, whose rod shall blossom, *God hath chosen* to fill the office of the priesthood, and to minister to Him." He evidently implies the existence of a priestly order in the Church, clothed by God with special sacerdotal powers, as Aaron was in the Old Testament. The apostles made arrangements, by which they at once forestalled dissension, and provided for the continuance of this ministry. Those who rebel, therefore, against those appointed by the apostles themselves, or by other men of

¹ The ecclesiastical officials were still probably men of the world, who earned their living like the rest of the faithful.

repute in accordance with the apostolic arrangements, are guilty of injustice and strife. Their sin is increased by the fact that the office-bearers have done nothing to provoke this harsh treatment: "Blessed are those elders who have gone before, and who had a fruitful and ripe departure; for they have no fear lest anyone should remove them from *their appointed place*. But we see you have displaced some, who lived honourably, from the ministry which had been honoured by them blamelessly." There is no ground for the contention, that Clement regarded the ministry as merely a matter of order, and not of "special and exclusive power." Though the office-bearers are elected with the consent of the whole church, they must, nevertheless, be ordained by the apostles or "other men of repute." They are sent, not by the community, but by the apostles, as the apostles themselves were sent by Christ. Their functions differ from those of the rest of the faithful, as the functions of the different grades of the divinely-appointed hierarchy of the Jewish church differed from those of the laymen; or as the functions of the different organs differ in the human body. Finally, the celebration of the Eucharist is the right and duty of the overseers alone.

Timothy likewise possessed a special power or gift (*χάρισμα*), which was given him by (*διὰ*) the imposition of St. Paul's hands.¹ Dr. Hatch points out that *χάρισμα* has a "wide latitude of meaning." But does that imply that its meaning is *indefinite* in a particular passage? In view of the instructions given to Timothy, the word has a very definite signification in the passage before us. It implies the power to teach, rule and impose hands. Are we to suppose, for instance, that the imposition of hands was not a "special and exclusive power," and that "the community or individual Christians" were quite capable of exercising it? The instructions to Timothy, the mission of Titus, and the history of the *Acts* show that the contention is preposterous. Even though we grant to Dr. Hatch that *χάρισμα* has a wide latitude of meaning, is it not apparent that the word here implies a "special and exclusive" power? St. Paul has transmitted to Timothy a spiritual gift

¹ 2 Tim. i. 6.

of some kind, a gift which he exhorts him to stir up, with a view to a fruitful harvest in his Ephesian mission: "I admonish you to stir up the gift that is in you by the imposition of my hands; for (γάρ) God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power (δυνάμεως) and love and discipline (or sobriety). Be not ashamed, therefore, of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but suffer hardship with the Gospel according to the power of God."¹ In the first epistle, the apostle had given Timothy a similar exhortation; "Till I come give heed to reading, exhortation and teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee Be diligent in these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for, in doing so, thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee."² These exhortations evidently refer to Timothy's duties at Ephesus. Now, St. Paul tells him to stir up the gift he has received, with a view to the zealous fulfilment of these duties. Are we to suppose, with Dr. Hatch, that St. Paul gave Timothy nothing "to stir up"—no special power which Timothy did not possess before—no exclusive order, which placed him on a different footing from the faithful at Ephesus, and which enabled him to appoint to ecclesiastical office? Unless the passages quoted above are merely the fancies of a dreamer, St. Paul gave Timothy some gift. What was that gift? What, but a gift which he did not possess before; and which was given as the context shows, by imposition of hands, and with a view to the discharge of his missionary duties?

Again, the elders or overseers exercise a special function as pastors of the flock. They teach, preach, and rule with authority. For all this a mission is required: "How shall they preach unless they be sent?"³ From whom does St. Paul think the mission ought to come? The congregation? "Attend to yourselves and the whole flock in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers."⁴ The mission must, therefore, be divine. Hence the ranks of the episcopal college are to be filled, not by a vote of the congregation, but by the

¹ 2 Tim. i. 6-8.² 1 Tim. iv. 13-16.³ Rom. x.⁴ Acts. xx.

imposition of Timothy's hands.¹ St. Paul recognises in the elders or overseers a special spiritual mission,² which is not possessed by the laity, and which cannot be delegated by them. Hence he exhorts the Thessalonians: "We beseech you, brethren, to know those who labour among you, and who are over you in the Lord and admonish you; and to esteem them exceedingly highly in love for their work's sake." I do not think it can be reasonably maintained that there is question here of men told off by the community to look after certain functions; and that the "work" in question is merely such as could be exercised by any of the faithful. Yet, Dr. Hatch tells us: "The conception of office was that of order; in virtue of their appointment, the officers of the Christian communities were entitled to perform functions, which in themselves were the functions of the whole church or of individual Christians." It is only necessary to bear in mind that the overseers exercise in their own communities the ministry of the prophets, to see the contradictions into which Hatch's theory leads him.

The prophet of the *Didache* is not the elected representative of any community, or of any body of individual Christians. This is clear from the itinerant nature of his office. He nevertheless exercises an important ministry, by reason of which he is entitled to the highest consideration. This ministry cannot be "in itself the function of individual Christians"; for, in the first place, the extraordinary deference paid to the prophet would be meaningless on this hypothesis; and secondly, no Christian could claim, on his own authority, the consideration that is extended to the prophet in the *Didache*. Again, "the conception of the (prophetic) office" cannot have been "that of order." The prophet belongs to no particular community; he remains but a single day with each church; he cannot, therefore, be the custodian of order, nor the representative elected for the sake of convenience, to officiate at a common function. The prophet has a special ministry; he is the representative of the Holy Ghost; he must be received as the Lord. His ministry is independent of the communities he visits; it is

¹ I. Tim. v.

² It is unnecessary to distinguish here between orders and jurisdiction, for both are denied.

peculiar to the prophetic order ; it is called " the ministry of the prophets." The overseers, however, exercise among their own flock the same ministry ; for this reason they are, with the prophets, the honourable men of the community. Now, if the ministry in question implies an " exceptional spiritual power " when exercised by the prophets, it obviously implies a similar power when exercised by the overseers. If the prophet enjoys a gift, which he cannot of himself initiate, and which the community cannot delegate to him ; it follows, I think, that the overseers, who exercise the same ministry, cannot be merely representatives of the congregation. They too have a gift (χάρισμα) which must come from God, and which is transmitted to them, as it was transmitted to Timothy, by imposition of hands.¹ Dr. Hatch is quite mistaken, therefore, in his conception of the Christian office ; and he simply contradicts the sources, when he tells us that the writers of the first two centuries attribute no " exceptional spiritual powers " to the Christian hierarchy.

From the examples already quoted, it can be gathered that imposition of hands, whether for confirmation or ordination, was conferred only by the apostles, or by men who had been themselves ordained by the same ceremony. The events narrated in Acts ix. 17, can create no difficulty in this connection. Apart from the fact that we have no evidence to show whether or not Ananias held office, it is clear that there can be no question in this passage of the giving of a sacrament. The New Testament everywhere implies that baptism is the first step in the Christian life.² St. Paul had not yet been baptised, and was incapable therefore of receiving a sacrament. Hands were imposed on him, that he might see.³ It is not clear whether this was the occasion of St. Paul's first reception

¹ From the evidence we have already examined we may conclude that the overseers were ordained here as elsewhere by imposition of hands. The writer here omits the mention of this ceremony, not because it was unknown to him, but because the *Didache* is a manual *for the faithful*. Now the faithful did not impose hands ; they merely elected and presented the candidates as in the case of the seven at Jerusalem. Hence the author contents himself with exhorting them to elect suitable candidates.

² Cfr. Acts viii., xix. 3-6., Heb. vi. 1-2.

³ Cfr. Mark. xvi. 18. " They shall impose hands on the sick and they shall recover."

of the Holy Ghost. If it was, the event is exactly parallel to the phenomenon recorded about Cornelius in the next chapter. While St. Peter was preparing his converts for baptism, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and "they spoke with tongues and magnified God." It is important to note that the reception of the Spirit, even when accompanied by miraculous powers, does not dispense from the reception of baptism. Even St. Paul, in whose case the will of God has been so clearly manifested, and who appears to have received the Holy Ghost on this occasion—even he has to submit to the ordinary laver of regeneration.

These facts throw considerable light on the separation of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. They tend to show, in the first place, that the call of these apostles did not dispense them from the necessity of receiving sacramental ordination. They tend to show, in the second place, that the mere possession of miraculous gifts did not qualify the prophets and teachers at Antioch to ordain Paul and Barnabas. The two future apostles seem to have enjoyed the prophetic gifts as fully as those who imposed hands on them; if they still required sacramental ordination, it is but reasonable to conclude that those who imposed hands had been themselves ordained in like manner.¹ Finally, it is to be noted that both Ananias and the ministers at Antioch received a special divine mission for the occasion. If they really exercised a power, which was normally reserved to apostles, this exceptional action cannot be taken into account, in a discussion on the necessity of a transmitted ministry in ordinary circumstances.

A discussion on the theory of apostolic succession would be incomplete without some reference to the position held by Presbyterian scholars. Dr. Lindsay, whom we shall take as a representative Presbyterian theologian, follows to a considerable extent the lines laid down by Dr. Hatch. He does not tell us clearly whether he considers the ministry to imply exceptional spiritual powers; but we conclude from his principles that he is agreed on this point with Dr. Hatch. He tells us, in the preface to his work, that he postulates the existence of a Christian ministry: "There is and there must be a valid

¹ See below, Chapter X.

ministry of some sort, in the churches that are branches of this one Visible Catholic Church of Christ : but I do not think that the fact that the Church possesses an authority, which is a direct gift from God, necessarily means that the authority must exist in a class or caste of superior office-bearers endowed with a grace, and therefore with a power 'specific, exclusive and efficient,' and that it cannot be delegated to the ministry by the Christian people." In these words is summed up his theory of the ministry. The clergy hold some kind of divine authority ; but all such authority comes from the people. The government of the Church is or ought to be, democratic ;¹ and the ministry is nothing more than the parliament of the community. Dr. Lindsay takes great exception to the theory of apostolic succession. His zeal in this respect is not to be wondered at, for the validity of the whole Presbyterian ministry is at stake. "I do not see," he says, "why the thought that authority comes from above, a dogmatic truth, need in any way interfere with the conception that all ecclesiastical power is representative, and delegated to the officials by the membership. . . . Therefore when the question is put : 'must ministerial character be in all cases conferred from above, or may it sometimes and with equal validity, be evolved from below ?' it appears to me that a fallacy lurks in the antithesis. 'From below' is used in the sense 'from the membership of the church,' and the inference suggested by the contrast is that what comes from below, *i.e.*, from the membership of the church, cannot come 'from above,' *i.e.*, cannot be of divine origin, warrant and authority. Why not ? May not the Spirit use the membership of the church as His instrument ?" Dr. Lindsay thinks the Spirit may and *does* act in this manner ; but it is not easy to discover for what purpose, or to confer what power, He so acts. The writer devotes a chapter to proving that the churches, that is the local communities, of

¹ Even the apostles are subject to the congregation : "The assembly of the local church summoned even apostles before it, and passed judgment upon them. The apostles might suggest, but the congregation ruled." The judgment referred to is that of Acts. xi. 1-4, where there is really question, not of a judgment, but a remonstrance merely. Compare what we have said in Chapters II and III on the authority of the apostles.

the first century created their own ministry. The ministry so created in the first was changed in the second century ; and the office-bearers were never any more than the representatives of the congregation. They never held any " specific, exclusive and efficient powers." What then does the Spirit confer through the instrumentality of the congregation ?

According to Lindsay, the Christian communities which the gospel called into existence were something like religious clubs. No mission was required by those who founded them ; no ministry was required in those who governed them : " There is not a trace of the idea that the churches had to be organised from above, in virtue of power conferred by our Lord officially and specially upon certain of their members." ¹ In the smaller communities certain services were required. A meeting room had to be provided ; the sick had to be visited, the young instructed, the weak encouraged in the faith : " Some persons have to see to all these things. They will naturally season their work with advice, admonition, warning and encouragement. The men, who begin to do these things from their love of the cause and the work, naturally go on doing them ; and their activity which was at first purely personal and voluntary tends to become recognised and official." ² These natural leaders were called *προϊστάμενοι*, to represent the relationship of patron and client. In other churches, the Christians copied the organisation of the Jewish synagogue, and elected " elders " to look after the interests of the community. In others still, the charismatic gifts took the place of the regular organisation, by enabling men " to offer wise counsels, to assist their neighbours, to lead the devotions and to manage the affairs of the community." Where apostles or apostolic delegates are concerned in the work of organisation, their duty consists in suggesting and guiding the action of the faithful. The apostles guided and sanctioned the election of " the seven " at Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas " saw " elders elected in the churches of Asia Minor ; the duty of Titus was " to see that elders were chosen in every local church " in Crete. The power of ordination was nothing more than the gift of discernment, applied to the selection of candidates for office :

¹ Op. cit. p. 121.

² *ib.* p. 122.

"This gift of discernment, when applied to teaching, implied that those who were really believed to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit were to be heard with reverence, and that the hearers ought to fashion their lives according to what was taught. The same gift, when applied to the discernment of abilities for rule and service, implied the power to select and bestow office upon men so gifted, and the duty of the community to obey its chosen leaders in all practical matters." The power of orders was merely the power to serve the community, based on a gift of the Spirit; "and the occasion of these particular services is their recognition by the community, who appoint the brethren to serve it." It is the congregation, therefore, that really appoints to office: "The function of the missionary or his deputy, as we see from the pastoral epistles, was to advise the community in their selection of those who were to be over them, and to inculcate such principles of selection as would abide permanently in their minds, and thus secure a worthy succession of office-bearers, when the first missionaries of the gospel were no longer present to advise." At an early date the services referred to developed into offices, and the *προϊστάμενοι*, *ποιμένες*, *ἐπίσκοποι*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, and *διάκονοι* were the holders of these offices. The first four of these titles represent the "oversight"; the last represents a "subordinate service." These constituted the ministry of each church or congregation: they looked after the discipline of the community, visited the sick, and in the absence of the prophets presided at the public worship, especially the Eucharist.

We have already criticised in anticipation most of Dr. Lindsay's assumptions. It will suffice to draw attention here to the weakness of his theory of ordination. "May not the Spirit," he asks, "use the membership of the Church as His instrument?" We quite agree that the Spirit *might* do so if He pleased; but we are not prepared to admit, with the Presbyterians, that He *does* use such means for transmitting ministerial authority. The only reason advanced by Dr. Lindsay, so far as I can find, is the "fact" that the local communities of the first century created their own ministry. Now, if there is anything clear from the *Acts*, the epistles of St. Paul, and the epistle of Clement, it is that this "fact" exists only in the Presbyterian imagination. We have already referred to the

events narrated in *Acts* xiv. 22, and to Lindsay's explanation of them. St. Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabas "confirmed the faithful, established elders *for them*, and commended them to the Lord." Dr. Lindsay tells us that they did not establish elders at all, but merely *saw* them *elected*. By an exegesis of this kind, a man could prove anything from Scripture. But enough has been said on this passage already.

Dr. Lindsay explains on the same lines the ordination of the seven at Jerusalem, the ordination of elders in Crete and at Corinth, and presumably the ordination of Timothy at Ephesus. The appointment of the seven, he tells us, "contains three interesting elements—apostolic guidance and sanction; the self-government and independence of the community, evinced in the responsibility for good government laid upon the whole membership; and as a result a representative administration suggested by the everyday surroundings of the people." What does the Presbyterian scholar mean by apostolic "sanction"? Does it include imposition of hands? If so, is the ministry merely representative of the church membership? The narrative of the *Acts* gives us a solution to these questions—a solution, moreover, which differs very much from that proposed by Dr. Lindsay. The apostles said: "Seek out therefore, brethren, from your number seven men of good reputation, whom *we* may set over this work . . . And the word pleased the multitude, and they chose seven men . . . whom they set before (in the presence of) the apostles; and they praying imposed hands on them."¹ There is evidently a twofold action recorded, that of the faithful and that of the apostles. Notice that the apostles do not ask the faithful to appoint (χειροτονεῖν) the seven to office, or to set them over the work (καθίσταναι ἐπὶ χρείας), but merely to look out for (ἐπισκέψασθε) seven men, whom the apostles themselves will appoint (καταρτίσωμεν). Now, the faithful chose out (ἐξελέξαντο) seven men in accordance with these instructions, and brought them before the apostles. Why did the faithful set the seven before the apostles? And why did the latter pray over them, and impose hands on them? Are not these events manifestly the

¹ Acts. vi.

fulfilment of the words, "whom we shall appoint"? St. Luke could scarcely have expressed himself more clearly; and Dr. Lindsay does violence to the narrative, when he introduces his theory of an apostolate, "seeing to" the appointment of office-bearers by the congregation.

Dr. Lindsay also tells us that it was the duty of Titus to "see" elders elected in all the churches of Crete. He does not say how he reconciles this explanation either with the text or context. The action of Titus is expressed by the word *καταστήσης*. In classical Greek¹ the word means *to appoint*. It is the word used for the action of the apostles in the sixth chapter of the *Acts*.² Now in this passage it cannot bear Dr. Lindsay's interpretation, though the context is similar. By what right then does the Presbyterian scholar divorce the word in the epistle to Titus from what is both its pagan and its Christian signification? The obvious meaning of the passage is that Titus is to appoint to office, not to "see" that others do it. This interpretation is, moreover, the only one that will harmonise with the context. St. Paul gives not the slightest hint throughout the epistle that the congregation have any part in the ordination of office-bearers. He does not even mention whether the faithful have a voice in the selection of candidates. Titus, and he alone, is mentioned as having the duty and responsibility of appointing overseers and deacons. For this reason he is left in Crete; for this reason he is instructed on the qualifications which he is to require in candidates for office. Titus was left in Crete, says Lindsay, "to complete the work, which the apostle, pressed for time, could not stay to finish." But on Lindsay's own theory, neither the apostle nor Titus was required to finish the work; for the congregation was quite capable of appointing to office without any assistance from outside.

Dr. Lindsay has steered clear, so far, of all reference to the imposition of hands. His views on this important question are expressed incidentally, in a foot-note dealing with Timothy: "The apostle received him with the kindly Jewish benediction,

¹ In Thucydides, for instance, *καθίσταται στρατηγόν* always means to appoint a general.

² Cfr. Epistle of Clement. ch. 44.

laying his hands on his head (2 Tim. i. 6); and the elders of the church also gave the young man their benediction before he set out on his new life-work." The imposition of hands implied no more than the kindly Jewish benediction; yet, Dr. Lindsay immediately goes on to tell us that "there is a striking parallel between the call of Timothy and the earlier 'call' of the great apostle himself." One cannot help thinking that the writer here finds himself in a difficulty. The imposition of hands is intimately connected with the "call" of St. Paul and that of Timothy, yet it is merely the kindly Jewish benediction. We do not know exactly what Lindsay means by the "call" of Paul or Timothy. It cannot be the election of the congregation, for neither of these men were the representatives—to use Lindsay's expression—of any particular community. But whatever he means, we fail to see the connection between the call to a Christian ministry and a Jewish benediction. St. Paul's own explanation of these facts differs widely from Dr. Lindsay's. "Wherefore," says the apostle in the passage before us,¹ "I admonish you to stir up the gift that is in you, which was given you by means of (*διὰ*) the imposition of my hands." The gift, which Timothy possessed, and which St. Paul urges him to stir up with a view to a fruitful mission at Ephesus—in other words, the "call" to which Lindsay refers—was transmitted to him by the imposition of St. Paul's hands. It would be interesting to have from Dr. Lindsay's pen a more detailed commentary on this passage, especially if he explained for us how he reconciles his theory of a mere Jewish benediction with the words of St. Paul. He has unfortunately passed over this point in silence. His views on this question, so far as we can gather from his work, coincide largely with those of Dr. Hatch; we shall, therefore, content ourselves with referring to what we have already pointed out in our criticism of the latter.

Clement's epistle also furnishes weighty evidence against Lindsay's theory; for the notion of apostolic succession runs through his argument. Here again, Dr. Lindsay treats us—incidentally, of course—to an interesting exegesis: "The

¹ 2. Tim. i. 6.

function of the missionary or his deputy, as we can see from the pastoral epistles, was to *advise* the community in their selection of those who were to be over them, and to inculcate such principles of selection as would abide permanently in their minds, and thus secure a succession of worthy office-bearers, when the first missionaries of the Gospel were no longer present to advise ; or to use the words of Clement of Rome : ' Our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the overseer's office. For this cause, therefore, having complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards gave a further injunction that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed in their administration.'"¹ The apostolic succession of which Clement speaks, then, is merely the succession of men imbued with the principles of good government, who will keep the congregation reminded—when the first missionaries are no longer present to advise—of such principles of selection as will secure worthy office-bearers. Clement's own words are the best criticism of Lindsay's explanation. The epistle continues : " Those, therefore, who were appointed by them (the apostles), or subsequently by other distinguished men, with the consent of the whole church . . . we consider unjustly cast out." If Dr. Lindsay had included this sentence in his quotation, his readers could have easily seen that the apostolic succession, which he describes, is quite different from that spoken of by Clement. The congregation, or rather the congregation conjointly with the distinguished men, select the candidates (*συνενοδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας*) ; nevertheless, it is to the distinguished men alone that the appointment pertains.² The successors of the apostles are not merely advisers, therefore ; they are the ordaining prelates, who appoint to office the overseers and deacons. The passage requires no further comment : Lindsay's interpretation of Clement is quite as violent and arbitrary as his interpretation of the *Acts* and pastoral epistles.

¹ Clement ch. 44. The italics are ours. Notice *λειτουργία* translated *administration*. Notice also the duty of Timothy and Titus to "advise" merely. Lindsay does not tell us what passages of the pastoral epistles enable us "to see" that this was "the function of the missionary or his deputy."

² *καθίστημι* again.

CHAPTER VII.—EPISCOPAL AND SUPEREPISCOPAL JURISDICTION.

MODERN scholars are generally agreed in setting down Titus and Timothy as apostolic delegates; earlier writers speak of them as bishops of Crete and Ephesus respectively. Each of these views appears to contain an element of truth. To the disciples in question, St. Paul assigns the duty of organising in one case, of governing, in both, the churches committed to their care. They ordain to ecclesiastical office; they look after the clergy in the matter of discipline; they guard the deposit of faith; they excommunicate heretics.¹ Their functions, in fine, are precisely those of a bishop in later times. Their jurisdiction, however, is of a different kind; for it is neither ordinary, permanent nor diocesan.²

Let us first examine the status of Titus. "For this reason I left thee in Crete," says St. Paul, "that thou mayst correct the things that are wanting, and establish elders in every city, as I gave thee charge."³ Again: "When I send thee Artemas or Tychicus, hasten to come to me at Nicopolis; for I have decided to winter there." In the second epistle to Timothy we read: "Demas has left me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia; Luke alone is with me." Titus was sent to Crete, therefore, on a special temporary mission; his chief duty being to organise the churches of the island. These churches are not parishes in the modern sense of the word. The work of Titus is to organise in each city an independent community, such as Paul and Barnabas organised in Lystra, Iconium, Derbe, and other towns of Asia Minor. Each of these churches will form, as elsewhere, an independent diocese with its own governing body. Hence we find Dionysius of Corinth writing to "the church of Gortyna and the other churches of Crete,"

¹ Tit. iii. 10.² *i.e.* confined to the diocese.³ Tit. i. 5.

in the middle of the second century.¹ Philip was then bishop of Gortyna, and Pinytus bishop of Gnosse.² Crete had several churches ; and each church meant a diocese. It was quite so in apostolic times. The local church is the unit of ecclesiastical organisation in the New Testament. Each city has one church ; but each province has several. Crete corresponds exactly, in this respect, to the provinces of the mainland. When Titus is left, "to establish elders in all the cities of Crete," the meaning can only be that he is to organise a diocesan church and hierarchy in each city, as St. Paul had done in the provinces of Cilicia, Asia, Achaia, and Macedonia. Titus is not a diocesan bishop, therefore ; he appears to have no special interest in any one of these churches, but exercises a superepiscopal jurisdiction over all. In virtue of the authority which he holds from St. Paul, he sets up the organisation, which calls into existence the ordinary jurisdiction of each diocese ; and he appoints a college³ of elders in each church, to exercise this jurisdiction. His recall from Crete demands no explanation from St. Paul ; it is not the tearing away of a bishop from his flock, but the recall of a legate, who had been sent on a special temporary mission. Titus holds in the spiritual province a position like that of the proconsul in the civil ; he is a pro-apostle, exercising, by delegation, the supreme control over the Christian municipalities.

What Titus was in Crete Timothy was in Ephesus. At this time Ephesus was the metropolis of proconsular Asia ; and it is very probable that Timothy exercised his authority over the greater part of the province, as St. John did when he settled at Ephesus a few years later. The same causes, which rendered necessary the supervision of the church of Ephesus by a reliable disciple, would naturally induce St. Paul to extend that supervision to the district around the metropolis. Timothy, like Titus, has received a special temporary mission : "As I exhorted thee to remain at Ephesus, while I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain parties not to teach heterodox doctrine, nor

¹ Euseb. iv. 23.² *ib.* iv. 25. 23.³ v. Appendix E.

give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which beget questionings, rather than a dispensation of God in faith."¹ This mission, as we should expect from the words in which it is recorded, is only temporary : " These things I write to you, hoping to come to you soon, but if I should be delayed that you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God."² We are not surprised, therefore, to read in the second epistle : " Titus is gone to Dalmatia. . . . I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus . . . hasten (thou) to come before winter."³ Timothy is not the diocesan bishop of Ephesus, therefore ; he is an apostolic delegate—probably one of the " distinguished men " referred to by Clement. If he has a special title, it seems to be " evangelist " ; for St. Paul says : " Do thou watch ; labour in all things ; perform the work of an evangelist ; fulfil thy ministry."

St. Paul had already sent Timothy on similar missions to other churches. Writing to the Thessalonians, he says : " We have sent Timothy, our brother, and God's minister in the Gospel of Christ, to strengthen you and exhort you about your faith, that no man may be moved in these afflictions. For you yourselves know that for this we are appointed."⁴ To the Corinthians he writes : " For this cause I sent you Timothy, who is my dear and faithful son in the Lord ; who will put you in mind of my ways in Christ, according as I teach in every church."⁵ Notice the likeness between the accounts of these missions and the account of that at Ephesus : " I exhorted thee to remain at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain persons not to teach heterodox doctrine, or give heed to fables and endless genealogies." Instruction in the faith is Timothy's chief duty in all cases ; but he exercised other functions, no doubt, at Corinth and Thessalonica as well as at Ephesus.

Timothy and Titus were not the only faithful disciples who followed St. Paul. Tychicus is called " a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord."⁶ It is he who is sent to replace Timothy at Ephesus. Artemas

¹ 1 Tim. i.

² *ib.* iii. 14.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 10-13.

⁴ 1 Thess. iii. 2.

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 17.

⁶ Colos. iv. 7.

occupies the same rank as Tychicus ; for the apostle has not decided, when writing to Titus, which of them he will send to Crete. Many others are mentioned, with these, as St. Paul's companions on his journeys ; or as his fellow-workers, colleagues, or companions in arms. Such, for instance, are Mark, Silas, Gaius, Trophimus, Aristarchus and Sopater. These, as well as Timothy and Titus, had accompanied him on his apostolic journeys, and had proved their zeal for the gospel. We should naturally, expect, therefore—and what we know of Timothy, Titus, Tychicus and Artemas, confirms the presumption—that all or most of these were promoted to episcopal orders.

Were Timothy and Titus the only two of St. Paul's disciples to receive an apostolic delegation to certain churches ? And was the system of government which obtained in Crete and at Ephesus, under their jurisdiction, exceptional ? It is well to bear in mind that, in discussing these questions, we are seriously handicapped by the scantiness of our data. Thanks to the preservation of the pastoral epistles, we can ascertain in considerable detail the nature of the Cretan and Ephesian missions ; but, when we come to examine the state of affairs in other churches, we can only piece together the incidental remarks made by St. Paul on various occasions, and endeavour to glean from these the solution of our problem.

Timothy, as we have already observed, had been sent to Corinth and to Thessalonica, before he received his Ephesian commission. On each of these occasions his chief duty was the teaching of sound doctrine. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that his only function was a magisterial one. If we were dependent on the opening words of the first pastoral epistle, we might reasonably suppose that the Ephesian mission was also purely magisterial. We know, however, from other parts of the epistle, that Timothy was a monarchical superior at Ephesus ; that he attended to the discipline of the community and of the clergy ; and that it was his duty to ordain men, when necessary, to the orders of overseer and deacon. May we not reasonably suppose that his Corinthian and Thessalonian missions also implied the same

secondary duties ? We have reason to believe that at Corinth, at least, he was more than a mere teacher : " If Timothy shall come to you, see that he is without fear among you ; for he does the work of the Lord, even as I myself. Let no man despise him, therefore."¹ In the absence of St. Paul, Timothy takes his place at Corinth, as he takes it at Ephesus a few years later. He holds a position of authority, as appears from the exhortation,² " Let no man despise him." The words, " See that he is without fear," suggest at once a judicial function ; for it was in the fulfilment of his duty as a custodian of discipline that he was most likely to be subjected to fear. There were doctrinal disputes at Corinth indeed ; but it can scarcely be for his orthodoxy that Timothy was exposed to violence. He must have been as safe in this respect as any of the faithful ; and the exhortation is addressed, moreover, to the whole community. The duties of a zealous reformer, on the other hand, might easily bring him into conflict with the least controllable elements of the congregation.

Titus was subsequently sent on a special mission to this same church. Two " apostles (*i.e.* messengers) of the churches " accompanied him ; but Titus alone seems to have been invested with apostolic authority : " I give thanks to God, who gave Titus the same zeal for you. For he indeed accepted our exhortation ; but, being very zealous, he went to you voluntarily. We have also sent with him the brother whose praise in the Gospel is spread through all the churches. . . . We have sent with them also our brother whom we have proved to be zealous. . . . If (you ask) about Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker towards you ; if about our brothers, they are the apostles of the churches, the glory of Christ."³ Commending the Corinthians for their obedience to Titus, St. Paul says : " His heart is more abundantly towards you in love, when he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him."⁴ Titus must, therefore, have wielded great authority ; he must have been the monarchical superior of the church during his

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

² 2 Cor. viii. 16. seq.

³ Cfr. 1 Tim. iv. 12. ; Tit. ii. 15.

⁴ *ib.* vii. 15.

sojourn ; for the Corinthians received him with fear and trembling, and rendered him a ready obedience. If Titus enjoyed such authority, because he was St. Paul's fellow-worker towards the Corinthians (*εἰς ἑμᾶς*), Timothy, for the same reason, must have wielded equal authority during his sojourn some time previously. Both perform the work of the Lord, like St. Paul himself ; both are his representatives in the church of Corinth ; both have been sent by him to look after the spiritual interests of the community. There can be little doubt, therefore, that we have on two occasions at Corinth a system of government precisely similar to that which obtained at Ephesus a few years later.

The likeness of mission and circumstances establishes a strong presumption that Timothy exercised equal authority at Thessalonica, when he visited the church there as the legate of St. Paul. The temporary character of these missions creates, I think, no special difficulty to the explanation just given. The Cretan and Ephesian missions were likewise temporary, and were perhaps of equally short duration. St. Paul seems to have visited Crete for the first time only after his first Roman imprisonment. On his departure, he left Titus behind him, to organise the churches. Writing soon afterwards, he promises to send Artemas or Tychicus to Crete ; and he instructs Titus to come to Nicopolis, as soon as his successor shall arrive. From the second epistle to Timothy, we know that Titus did not return to Crete, but went to Dalmatia. Timothy was left at Ephesus in somewhat similar circumstances while St. Paul himself went to Macedonia. The journey in question must be placed after the first Roman imprisonment ; towards the end of St. Paul's life, therefore. Yet we know that Timothy was subsequently recalled, and that Tychicus was sent to take his place. Neither of these missions, therefore, can have been of long duration ; yet both Timothy and Titus were monarchical superiors in their respective districts.

We may compare with the mission of Titus in Crete that of Epaphras in Phrygia. Epaphras, " a most dear fellow-servant and a fellow-prisoner " of St. Paul's, was a Colossian by birth ; and was, probably, converted by St. Paul at Ephesus.

He subsequently preached the Gospel in his native district, and organised flourishing churches at Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. By what authority did he do so? The evidence tends to show that he, like Titus, received a special commission from St. Paul. Though the communities founded by Epaphras had never seen the apostle in the flesh, yet he shows the greatest interest in their welfare; and apparently expects them, in turn, to be interested in him. He sends letters to the churches of Colossae and Laodicea, to congratulate them on their conversion, and to tell them of his care and continual prayer for them. He exhorts them to be steadfast in the faith they have learned from Epaphras, the faith which is preached throughout the whole world, the faith of which Paul himself is a minister. "All my affairs," he says, "will Tychicus make known to you . . . whom I have sent for this purpose, that he may know the things that concern you, and that he may comfort your hearts; together with Onesimus, who is one of you. All things that are done here they will make known to you. Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, salutes you; and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas; concerning whom you have received commandments—if he come, receive him. . . . Epaphras salutes you, he who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always solicitous for you in prayer, that you may stand perfect and full in all the will of God. For I bear him testimony, that he has much labour for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis."¹ These are not the words of a man who regarded himself as a stranger to his readers. There is a tone of intimacy and fatherly interest in the letter, which is wanting in the epistle to the Romans. St. Paul feels that his readers know and love him, even though they have never seen his face. He feels that his affairs have a special interest for the Colossians, and that Tychicus, his messenger, will be welcomed by them. He could not speak more confidently to the faithful of one of his own foundations. How are we to account for this community of interest? The explanation must be sought, I think, in the fact that Epaphras was sent to this district by

¹ Colos. iv. 7-13.

St. Paul, as Titus was sent to the cities of Crete. The churches founded by him, therefore, cherished the same love for St. Paul as if they had been founded by the apostle himself. St. Paul, in turn, took a deeper interest in the work of Epaphras, than he would have taken in what he himself calls "another's foundation."

It is on the same lines, I think, that we must explain the Roman imprisonment of Epaphras, and the mission of Archippus. It is difficult to see for what reason Epaphras could have been brought a prisoner from Phrygia to Rome. In the absence of any record of such an event, it is more reasonable to suppose that Epaphras was a voluntary fellow-prisoner, in as much as he lived with St. Paul at Rome, and ministered to him in prison. Aristarchus, the other "fellow-prisoner" mentioned in the letter, was certainly such; for he had freely embarked with the apostle at Caesarea on the journey to Rome.¹ During the second imprisonment, we find St. Paul calling Timothy to his side, and giving him instructions to take with him Mark also, "because he is useful to me for ministering." The apostle had still at heart "the care of all the churches," and he needed reliable delegates to keep in touch with his converts throughout the Empire. He may have called Epaphras to his side on this occasion, as he subsequently called Titus, Timothy and Mark; or Epaphras may have accompanied him voluntarily, as did St. Luke and Aristarchus.

In the meantime, St. Paul seems to have sent his "fellow-soldier," Archippus, to take charge of the church of Colossae, in the absence of Epaphras. The way in which Archippus is singled out for mention, in the epistle to the Colossians, suggests that he held a unique ministry at Colossae; while the close connection between Laodicea and Colossae all through the epistle makes it probable that the successor of Epaphras exercised his supervision over both churches: "And when the epistle has been read among you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and let you also read that from Laodicea. And say to Archippus: see to the

¹ Acts, xxvii, 2.

ministry which thou has received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation of Paul with my own hand." St. Paul had nothing to do with the appointment of the ordinary office-bearers at Colossae; for he had never set foot in the city. It is difficult, therefore, to account for this exhortation to Archippus, except on the hypothesis we have proposed. Archippus has received "a ministry in the Lord," and he has received it, apparently, from the man who gives him such curt advice.¹ The data furnished by the epistle to the Colossians, though perhaps insufficient to place beyond controversy the view here put forward, nevertheless point strongly to a similarity of government between the churches of Crete and those of Phrygia.

In the second epistle to Timothy we read: "Crescens has gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia; Luke alone is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministering. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus." Of all St. Paul's disciples Luke alone was with the apostle at this time. The others had gone to various churches and provinces. What was their position in these districts? We have, unfortunately, no documentary evidence to help us to ascertain with certainty. The missions entrusted to Timothy and Titus on former occasions establish, however, a strong presumption that St. Paul, now a prisoner at Rome, and growing feeble perhaps in body, had begun to avail himself more freely of the services of his disciples; and that he exercised through them the supreme supervision of his chief foundations, as he had already exercised it through Titus and Timothy. As we have no record in the New Testament of the conversion of Dalmatia, we may presume that the province had few, if any, organised churches, when St. Paul wrote the pastoral epistles. The journey of Titus thither, following so closely his mission to Crete, had most probably the same object—"to supply the things which were wanting, and to establish elders in every city." The churches of Galatia, on the other hand, had been organised by the apostle

¹ Cfr. St. Paul's charge to Timothy: "Labour in all things; do the work of an evangelist; *fulfil thy ministry*" (2 Tim. iv. 5.).

himself ; but they required constant supervision, as we learn from the epistle addressed to them. When St. Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, he could not exercise this supervision in person ; for he was a prisoner in Rome.¹ Must we not see in the mission of Crescens an apostolic commission to look after the churches of Galatia, as Timothy looks after that of Ephesus ? About the same time, Trophimus lay sick at Miletus ; Erastus had been left at Corinth ; and Demas had deserted the apostle, and gone away to Macedonia. St. Paul tells us nothing of the whereabouts of the rest of his disciples. One of them probably resided at Philippi ; for St. Paul had recently promised the Philippians to send them Timothy, a promise which the subsequent course of events scarcely allowed him to fulfil.

From these facts, we can gather that the supervision of the churches of Ephesus and Crete by apostolic delegates was not exceptional. We learn from the scanty data that have come down to us that St. Paul sent his disciples on similar missions to Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Galatia, Dalmatia and probably Phrygia. His repeated references to false teachers, and his frequent warnings to the elders against a spirit of gain show that he was unwilling to leave the newly-founded communities to their own resources. During the earlier portion of his ministry, he frequently visited the communities he had already organised, correcting and supplying the things that were wanting. With the spread of the Gospel, the number of his foundations and the distance which separated them made it impossible for him to visit these churches as frequently as he desired. Provision had to be made, however, for the ordination and supervision of the clergy, for the maintenance of discipline, for the suppression of heresy, and for the further spread of the Gospel. In these circumstances, St. Paul availed himself largely of the services of his most faithful disciples, and sent them to take his place, for longer or shorter periods, in the centres which most required the exercise of apostolic jurisdiction. It will be noticed that in many of these cases the legate was sent, not

¹ 2 Tim. i. 17.

to an individual church, but to a province ; so that his jurisdiction extended to several communities. Even where a city, rather than a province, is mentioned, it is usually an important city, the metropolis of a large district ; so that, even here, the jurisdiction of the apostolic delegate was probably much wider than that of the local clergy.

We have already seen that the elders and overseers of the New Testament are the same individuals. We have now to inquire into the nature of their office. Did they hold the episcopal office, as we know it at the present day ? Or did they exercise merely the orders and jurisdiction of priests ? We shall first deal with the question of orders. Our solution of this part of the problem will depend on the answer we give to the question—Did the elders ordain to ecclesiastical office ? This is the only sure test of episcopal orders, in our sense of the word ; for Confirmation was generally conferred by priests in the Eastern Church. In this inquiry we are again handicapped by the scantiness of the data ; so that our conclusion will belong to the order of probability, rather than to that of strict certainty.

Clement of Rome, when dealing with the arrangements made by the apostles to secure the continuity of the ministry, makes no mention of the overseer's power to ordain. On the contrary, he implies that, when the ranks of the overseers are decimated by death, it is on certain " distinguished men," and not on the rest of the overseers, the duty devolves of ordaining men to the vacancies : " Our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the overseer's office. For this cause, therefore, they appointed the aforesaid (overseers), and afterwards provided a continuance,¹ that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. Those, therefore, who were appointed by them

¹ This translation is based on the reading *ἐπιμονήν* which is given by nearly all the mss. and versions. Since the discovery of a Latin ms. with the words "*legem dederunt*" critics are inclined to favour *ἐπινομήν* which gives the sense " The apostles made an additional injunction." The reading does not matter much either for our present argument or for the principle of apostolic succession.

(the apostles), or afterwards by other distinguished men with the consent of the whole church, . . . we consider unjustly cast out.”¹ Two facts are related about the apostles: they ordained the first overseers; and they afterwards made arrangements for the continuance of the ministry by the appointment of others. There are two classes of overseers in the church, therefore: the first appointed by the apostles themselves, the second appointed by “other distinguished men,” in accordance with the apostolic arrangements. Clement narrates these facts for a special purpose; he wants to show that the overseers appointed by men other than the apostles enjoy the same authority as those ordained by the apostles themselves; and that, consequently, the Corinthian sedition is wholly unjustifiable. Now, it will be noticed that it is not the overseers of the first class (*i.e.* those ordained by the apostles) who have ordained the overseers of the second class. In the first place, the ordination conferred on those first overseers gave no power to transmit the ministry; it was only “*afterwards*” that the apostles “provided a continuance, that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.” These first overseers, therefore, held the power of offering the gifts, but not the power of ordination; they had the orders of a priest, but not those of a bishop. In the second place, Clement implies that the second class of overseers were ordained, not by their predecessors, but by certain “distinguished men.” Some scholars, no doubt, have suggested that the distinguished men are only the overseers ordained by the apostles; but the explanation appears forced. If the overseers appointed by the apostles really assumed subsequent members into the presbyteral college, by imposition of hands, Clement would never have passed so abruptly from the definite title “overseers,” of which he is speaking, to the vague and undefined “distinguished men.” It would have been much more natural and convenient to say: “Those, therefore, appointed by the apostles, or others appointed by these, in turn, with the consent of the whole church . . .

¹ Clement Ch. 44.

we consider unjustly cast out." As it stands, the passage certainly suggests the activity at Corinth of unlocalised (*i.e.* non-diocesan) superiors, like Timothy and Titus, who, for want of a technical title, are called "distinguished men."

This interpretation of Clement harmonises with the data furnished by the pastoral epistles. In these epistles St. Paul, on two occasions, lays down a long catalogue of the virtues required, and the faults to be avoided, by candidates for the office of overseers. He likewise deals with their duties as pastors of the flock. In none of these cases, however, does he give us the least hint that the overseers are empowered to ordain to the ministry. Among the faults mentioned in connection with their office, we find no reference to the hasty imposition of hands, against which Timothy is warned. Ordination to the Ephesian hierarchy lies in the hands, not of the elders, but of Timothy. It is to him St. Paul expounds the qualifications of candidates for office; to him he entrusts the supervision of the clergy; to him he gives the warning: "Be not hasty to impose hands on any man." These instructions seem to be intended for Timothy personally; for St. Paul says: "Hoping to come soon, I write you these things, but if I am delayed, that you may know how to behave in the church of God." Nevertheless, they do not represent a temporary supersession of the local hierarchy; for, if Timothy is recalled, Tychicus is sent to take his place.

A similar state of affairs exists in Crete. The elders are to be stewards of God, pastors and teachers of the flock. There is no reference to what would have been, if they exercised it, one of their most important and responsible functions, namely the ordination of other ecclesiastical superiors: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou mightest correct the things that are wanting, and set up elders in every city as I gave thee charge." It is Titus who is to ordain the elders for *all* the churches of Crete. It will not be sufficient for him, therefore, to visit a few of the chief centres, and there appoint elders, who will in their turn ordain the office-bearers of the neighbouring churches. Not even when this mission is fulfilled, will Titus be free to leave

Crete. It is only when St. Paul shall send him Artemas or Tychicus, that he is to hasten to join his master at Nicopolis. In view of the purpose for which Titus was sent to Crete, what could have been the meaning of sending Artemas to replace him, if the elders when ordained were to hand down the ministry? We have already seen that Ephesus and Crete were not the only places to which apostolic delegates were sent. It is not too much to conclude that one of the chief purposes of these missions—as at Ephesus and Crete—was to replenish the ranks of the hierarchy, in the churches to which the delegates were sent.

When we consider the caution that St. Paul urges on Timothy and Titus, in the selection of candidates for office, we cannot reasonably suppose that he left in every community a number of men—the whole *πρεσβυτέριον*—empowered¹ to ordain others. The apostle seems to be always suspicious of the elders; he repeatedly exhorts them against ministering for gain. Now, there was no part of their ministry more liable to abuse than the power of ordination; for unworthy candidates—like Simon Magus, a few years earlier—were not lacking, we may be sure, even in the early Church. St. Paul could depend on no one, as he could on his own disciples—he complains of the fact in the epistle to the Philippians. The power of ordination was not a power which required to be permanently exercised in a community; its exercise was merely intermittent or occasional. It could await, therefore, the convenience of the apostle himself or one of his disciples. The various facts we have considered throw considerable light upon one another; and their cumulative force establishes a very strong presumption against the ordaining power of the overseers. Ordination, when necessary, seems to have been conferred by St. Paul or his disciples, during their frequent visits to the Christian communities.

There is one text which seems to imply that the elders had the full power of orders: "Neglect not the gift that is

¹ The limitation, which the apostle is here supposed to have made, may have affected either the *validity* or merely the *liceity* of the ordination. (See below.)

in you which was given you through (on account of?) prophecy with the imposition of the hands of the college of elders." ¹ From this it is argued that the spiritual power was given to Timothy by prophecy and the imposition of the hands of the elders. If we had no other text to guide us we might reasonably suppose that Timothy was ordained by mere elders or overseers. In the second epistle, however, St. Paul addresses his disciple as follows: "Wherefore, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the imposition of *my* hands." ² It has been suggested that St. Paul imposed hands as one of the presbyteral college. To this we may reply, in the first place, that the apostle cannot be included in the *πρεσβυτέριον*. St. Peter, indeed, calls himself the *συμπρεσβύτερος* of the elders he addresses; but it is quite clear that this term does not imply that he was a member of any presbyteral college. The council of elders was a purely local institution, each church having a distinct council; yet St. Peter was the fellow-elder of all the elders in Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. He uses the title in an absolute sense, to show that he is their fellow-minister. The word *πρεσβυτέριον*, on the other hand, implies membership in a council; it signifies the presbyteral college of the local church, a corporate body composed of all the elders of the community. There is no evidence that the apostles were ever included in such a council. On the contrary, their superior apostolic and universal jurisdiction forbids us to suppose any such arrangement. Secondly, even if St. Paul is included in the presbyteral college, it does not follow that the ordination of Timothy is attributable to the rest of the elders, as it is to the apostle. If St. Paul was merely one of a dozen or more ordaining prelates, how could he say so emphatically that the gift is "in you by the imposition of *my* hands." (Notice how the word *μου* stands out at the end of the sentence.) St. Paul shows, by the construction he

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 14. *μή ἀμελει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοὶ διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου.*

² 2 Tim. i. 6. *Χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου.*

uses, that it was his hands and not those of the *πρεσβυτέρων* that conferred the gift.

The difficulty arising out of the passage from the first epistle to Timothy disappears, if we translate *διὰ προφητείας* "on account of prophecies"; for then *μετά* (with) signifies, not causality, but mere accompaniment, as the passage from the second epistle requires. In favour of this rendering, we have the reference to prophecy in an earlier chapter: "This charge I commend to thee, my son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou mayest fight in them the good fight."¹ Timothy was pointed out by prophecy as a suitable candidate for office, as St. Paul himself had been pointed out at Antioch. We have also to take account of the fact that *προφητεία* is nowhere else used to signify the form of the sacrament, that is, the prayer accompanying the imposition of hands. St. Luke uses the word *προσεύχομαι* in recording the ordination of the seven, that of Paul and Barnabas, and that of the elders of Lystra, Iconium and Derbe. The corresponding nouns *εὐχή* and *προσευχή* are used by the Fathers. Timothy was ordained, therefore, *on account of* certain prophecies; but he was ordained *through* prayer and the imposition of St. Paul's hands. The elders, no doubt, took part in the ceremony; but the gift was given *through* (*διὰ*) St. Paul's action, *concomitantly with* (*μετά*) the action of the elders. If the passage from the second epistle had not come down to us, I confess I would not be inclined to lay great stress on this distinction of prepositions. When we take account, however, of the strong statement there made, as well as of the reference to prophecies and the use of *προσεύχομαι*, it must be admitted that St. Paul has a purpose in making the distinction. It does not follow therefore that the elders ordained Timothy, because they imposed hands. We have a similar ceremony at our ordinations to priesthood, at the present day.

The facts we have considered establish a presumption that the elders were not generally allowed to ordain candidates

¹ 1 Tim. i. 18.

to office. They scarcely suffice, however, to prove that ordination conferred by the elders would have been invalid. The passage just discussed, though it does not prove that the elders ordained Timothy, nevertheless suggests that they had power to do so. It may be urged that priests associate themselves with the bishop in imposing hands on the ordinands at the present day. The analogy, however, cannot be pressed. Ritual was in its infancy at the time with which we are dealing ; and it is extremely improbable that, at so early a date, a ceremony of this kind was introduced merely to add solemnity. I should be rather inclined to believe that the present custom is a relic, that has come down from the time when all the presbyters were bishops.¹ It will be noticed that, even at the present day, only priests, not deacons or minor clerics, are allowed to impose hands. We must also take account of the Alexandrian custom recorded by St. Jerome. If this custom really existed, the presbyters of Alexandria must have enjoyed the plenitude of orders. In churches which could not be easily visited by the apostles or their delegates, the same system must have prevailed ; for these churches must have had some means of perpetuating their ministry. The same may be said of the out-lying Egyptian communities, which appear to have had no monarchical bishops till a comparatively late date, but which nevertheless formed distinct dioceses from the beginning. As there is no evidence of grades among the elders, we must presume that these superiors held the same kind of office wherever the collegiate overseership was known.

The evidence, therefore, is not quite satisfactory ; indeed, it seems at first sight to be irreconcilable with itself. We can account for all the facts, however, by supposing that the elders had episcopal orders, but were not always at liberty

¹ Even though St. Paul alone actually conferred the sacrament on Timothy, all those who had power to do so associated themselves with him in this episcopal function. At the present day, three bishops impose hands on a bishop-elect, though one alone confers the sacrament. The theology on this point was not so well defined in the first century as it is now ; so that it is quite possible that all who imposed hands did so with a view to co-operating in some way in the actual transmission of orders.

to make use of the power of ordination. Here again, an illustration from later times will help us. Every bishop receives at his consecration power to consecrate other bishops ; yet he is forbidden to use that power till the bishop-elect has been approved by the Holy See. A few centuries ago episcopal consecration was reserved to the archbishop of the province ; and a suffragan could only consecrate with his consent, or as his assistant. A similar restriction seems to have existed in apostolic times. St. Paul never liked to leave a young church to its own resources ; he was always more or less fearful about the prudence and stability of a newly-converted hierarchy. To ensure the ordination of suitable candidates, he appears to have made it a rule to preside, whenever circumstances permitted him, or send some of his most trustworthy disciples to preside, at the ordinations to ecclesiastical office in all his chief foundations. This seems to be the only hypothesis, which will harmonise with all the facts recorded.

In the matter of jurisdiction, the elders appear to have enjoyed true episcopal authority, if not individually, at least collectively, or as a corporate body. The documents that have come down to us from the first century mention only two grades in the local hierarchy, overseers and deacons. The overseers are the pastors, the teachers and rulers of the community. The deacons are their subordinate assistants. After his third apostolic journey, St. Paul set sail for Jerusalem. He intended at first to sail past Ephesus to avoid delay, for he was anxious to reach the Holy City before Pentecost. At the last moment, however, he decided to call at Miletus ; and from that port he sent for the elders of Ephesus. It was a great and solemn occasion. The apostle wished to convey to one of his greatest foundations a last legacy of exhortation and instruction : " And now I go to Jerusalem, bound in the Spirit, not knowing what is to befall me, unless that the Spirit testifies to me in all the cities, saying that chains and tribulations await me at Jerusalem. . . . And behold I know that you, among whom I have passed preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no

more." In these circumstances, St. Paul must have sent for the chief local superiors of the church of Ephesus. To them alone would he have confided, at such inconvenience, his last great charge: "I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will enter in among you not sparing the flock. And from your own number men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them. Watch, therefore, bearing in mind that for three years I ceased not day and night warning each one of you with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace." These words addressed to the elders—for St. Paul had sent for no one else—show that they are the overseers and pastors of the flock, the supreme local rulers of the community. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear them addressed: "Attend to yourselves and to the *whole* flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers, to shepherd the church of the Lord, which He has purchased with His own blood." The whole discourse shows that St. Paul contemplates no higher authority in the church of Ephesus than the elders whom he addresses.

From the pastoral epistles we know that the elders watch over the discipline of the church, as the father watches over that of his family. The fact that Titus is directed to organise the churches of Crete under presbyteral colleges¹ shows that the presbyteral college is the highest local authority. Titus himself will continue to exercise a general supervision, such as Timothy exercises at Ephesus; but Titus is not a local superior, in the ordinary sense. His attention is equally given to all the churches of Crete; he exercises a super-episcopal jurisdiction. The elders are the rulers (οἱ προεστῶτες) of the community; and, as such, are worthy of double recompense, especially if they labour zealously in the word and in teaching. We have already seen the sense in which St. Paul makes a distinction in this passage. It is not a distinction of offices, but a distinction in the manner of fulfilling one and the same office. Every elder must be a teacher; it is one of the qualifications required in a candidate. The

¹ v. Appendix E.

magisterial function is explained at greater length in the epistle to Titus. It is the duty of the elders to exhort the faithful in sound doctrine, to refute heretics, "to reprove the disobedient vain-talkers" of the circumcision. The duty of reproving these disobedient vain-talkers shows that the elders are at the same time the supreme local teachers and the supreme local rulers. They hold, in other words, the ordinary episcopal jurisdiction.

St. Peter, likewise, speaks of the elders as the ordinary pastors of the community: "I beseech the elders among you . . . shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, exercising the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly . . . neither as lording it over your charge, but becoming examples of the flock." The repeated use of *ἐν ὑμῖν* (among you) shows that he speaks of local superiors. That he refers to the highest grade of the local hierarchy appears from several considerations. The elders are the only local superiors mentioned; and they are the pastors of the church, and the examples of the flock. They are warned against lording it over their charge—a fact which shows that there is no higher official on the spot to call them to account. When he wishes to excite them to zeal in their ministry, he reminds them of their responsibility to the Prince of pastors.

In the epistle of Clement we are told that "the apostles, preaching in country and town, established their first-fruits overseers and deacons of those who should believe." In speaking thus of a twofold local hierarchy, Clement is in perfect harmony with the *Epistle to the Philippians*, the *Acts*, the pastoral epistles and the *Didache*. In all these documents, we have the same system of diocesan government, a superior pastorate held by overseers or elders, and an inferior ministry held by deacons. Clement relates that the apostles foresaw that there would be contention about the overseer's office. The fact that it is with regard to the "oversight" the apostles anticipate contention goes a long way to show that the overseers were the highest order in the local church. The ambitious might naturally be expected to aim at the highest office; and even if the inferior offices were now and then

objects of dispute, the superior office-bearers could be relied on to solve the difficulty, without express legislation by the apostles. The nature of the Corinthian sedition points in the same direction. It is against the elders that the "head-strong and self-willed persons" rebel, when they wish to "set themselves up as leaders in abominable jealousy." The elders were evidently the leaders, before the trouble began. The remedy is simple: "Ye, therefore, that laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves to the elders";¹ and again: "It is right for us . . . to submit the neck, and occupying the place of obedience, to take our side with those that are the leaders of our souls."² The overseers are the supreme local rulers, the pastors of the flock, the leaders of souls.

The activity of the elders of Jerusalem harmonises exactly with this explanation. These dignitaries undertake to advise St. Paul on the attitude he ought to adopt towards the temple and the Jews.³ It is not implied that they claimed any authority over the apostle; the whole matter was one of consultation and prudence. It is nevertheless clear that the advice here given is the advice of men in authority, men who had to provide for the government and well-being of their community. They add, moreover, on this occasion: "But as touching the Gentiles that believe, we have written decreeing that they should only refrain from things offered to idols, from things strangled, and from fornication." The reference is to the council of Jerusalem. The Christians of Antioch had appealed to the apostles and elders of Jerusalem against the doctrine of certain Judaizing teachers. Why should the elders be included with the apostles, unless they were the ordinary teachers of the great mother-church? James was a teacher also, but he was an *apostolic*, not an *ordinary*, teacher. He is classed on this occasion with the apostles,⁴ not with the elders. The apostles and

¹ Clem. 57.

² *ib.* 63.

³ Acts. xxi.

⁴ This appears from St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians i. 19, ii. 9. It is confirmed by the usage of the *Acts*. St. Luke says "We went in to James and *all the elders* were gathered together," not "*the rest of the elders*."

elders were not merely arbitrators between contending parties; they sat in council, to give a dogmatic decision, and to enact binding disciplinary decrees: "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden on you than these necessary things." These decrees were made not merely for the Christians of Jerusalem or Judea or even Palestine; they were directed to the brethren of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. They were distributed through the churches of Asia Minor by St. Paul as τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα, a title which implies authority.¹ Whatever we think of the ecumenical nature of these decrees, it is clear that they imply a jurisdiction much wider than the ordinary jurisdiction of the particular church of Jerusalem. By what authority, then, did the elders sign these enactments? When the bishops of the Church meet in a general or provincial council, each bishop represents primarily the jurisdiction of his own community; yet the council makes general laws which are promulgated in each diocese in the name of the assembled fathers. It is in the same way that the elders of Jerusalem must have legislated for the Christians of Asia Minor. The apostles represented the universal Church, the elders represented the particular church of Jerusalem. The fact that both were associated in issuing binding decrees of such wide application can hardly be explained, except on the hypothesis that the elders held the ordinary (episcopal) teaching and legislative jurisdiction of the church of Jerusalem. The apostles could, indeed, have taught and legislated alone; for their jurisdiction was universal. It was fitting, however, that the first mother-church of Christendom should be represented by its ordinary superiors. It was represented by its elders; and the apostles allowed these elders to exercise what, in modern times, is the special prerogative of the bishop.

It has been suggested that the titles "overseers" and

¹ δόγμα means, not only an opinion, but also a resolution or decree—something like a *senatus consultum* at Rome. It is strengthened in this case by κεκριμένα, the ordinary word for authoritative judgment. When the two words are combined, and when in addition St. Paul distributes the decrees "to be kept," I do not see how it can be reasonably denied that the expression implies authority.

“elders” are ambiguous terms; that they leave a false impression; and that they do not really represent a college of equal superiors.¹ The monarchical episcopate, we are told, existed from the beginning; but, as there was no distinct title for the bishop, he was classed with the elders. What is said of the elders must be interpreted in the light of this fact; for episcopal jurisdiction belonged only to one of the elders, namely the bishop. This theory, however convenient, as a defence of the monarchical episcopate, does not harmonise well with the data we have examined. The episcopal jurisdiction is attributed in the New Testament, not to one, but to all the elders; and the interpretation put upon the titles, “elders” and “overseers,” is forced and arbitrary. The documents we have just examined give us no reason to suppose that there were degrees in the presbyterate. The same qualifications are required in all candidates for the office; the same privileges are extended to all; the same duties devolve upon all. Whether they are spoken of as ἐπίσκοποι or πρεσβύτεροι, they are mentioned without distinction of rank or power, in precisely the same manner as the deacons. When St. Paul addresses the elders of Ephesus, he addresses them collectively, attributing to them, as a body and without distinction, whatever authority they hold: “Attend to yourselves and to the whole flock, in which the Holy Ghost has placed you overseers, to shepherd the church of the Lord.” The authority of the elders at Jerusalem belongs to a body corporate, not to an individual; for all sit at the council, and all sign the decrees. The same is true of the elders of Ephesus; they form a πρεσβυτέριον—a fact which goes a long way to prove that they all belonged to the same class. The obvious meaning of St. Paul’s charge to Titus is that he is to set up in each city a college of equal elders. The same may be said of the elders established by Paul and Barnabas, of those addressed by St. Peter, and of those mentioned by Clement and the *Didache*.

¹ The words οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ought therefore be translated “the superior clergy” so as to leave room for distinction of office. But what about the expression τὸ πρεσβυτέριον?

What evidence can be brought forward from the literature of the first century in favour of a college of unequal elders ? Absolutely none, as far as I can find. The theory is not based on the documents of the first century, but on the tradition in favour of a monarchical episcopate. Whatever we may think of the existence of monarchical bishops in apostolic times it is not among the elders we are to look for such superiors. In view of the visitations made by the apostles, and the mission of apostolic delegates to the local churches, there was really no room for such a distinction. At Ephesus, for instance, the duties that would naturally have fallen to a monarchical elder were all performed by Timothy. To him was entrusted the supervision of the clergy and the other episcopal duties. The same may be said of all the churches to which St. Paul sent his delegates. The testimony of Eusebius is confessedly the chief argument for the view we are criticising. Eusebius, we are told, with the literature of the first three centuries before him, takes it for granted that monarchical bishops existed in many of the Pauline churches. The early writers, however, mention only two grades of the hierarchy, overseers or elders and deacons. The bishop must, therefore, be included in the higher of these two classes. We may presume, moreover, that a uniform system of government and nomenclature existed throughout the greater part of the Church ; so that any one of the chief Christian communities can be taken as a representative of the rest.

We shall deal presently with the beginnings of the monarchical episcopate. The question before us at present is whether the testimony of Eusebius compels us to believe, or even justifies us in believing, that the titles, " elders " and " overseers," include a bishop and a number of inferior clergy. Let us go to Eusebius. Is it among the presbyteral colleges of Crete—for there is one in each city of the island ¹—that Eusebius finds the monarchical bishops of the Cretan churches ? No ; he makes Titus himself the bishop of all Crete. He clearly supposes that the " elders," set up in each city, are

¹ v. Appendix E.

of equal rank. Is it among the οἱ προεστώτες πρεσβύτεροι that he finds the bishop of Ephesus? No; he makes Timothy the first bishop of that see. It is unnecessary to quote further examples; for, outside the four lists to which we shall afterwards refer, Eusebius mentions no first century bishops except the disciples of St. Paul. Now, Titus cannot have been one of the elders established in each city, as we have already pointed out. The presbyteral college was a purely local (diocesan) institution, a corporate body exercising jurisdiction over a single church. Titus was not sent to look after a single church, his jurisdiction and activity extended over the whole island, and belonged equally to all the churches. Can it be maintained with any show of reason, that Titus became a member of each and every presbyteral college which he himself set up? Or that, by reason of holding the chief place in every presbyteral college, he was bishop at once of every diocese in Crete? Even Eusebius would not think of putting forward such a contention.

The official title of Timothy seems to be "evangelist"; but, whatever his title is, he is not a member of the presbyteral college. The πρεσβύτεροι, as we know from the opposition of the word, νεώτεροι, and from the testimony of the *Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles*,¹ were at this time and for long afterwards chosen from the elderly men of the community. Timothy, for this very reason, could not have been classed with the elders.² St. Paul never speaks, therefore, of the elders or overseers as including Timothy; they are always spoken of in the third person, precisely as the deacons: "Let the elders that rule well be deemed worthy of double recompense. . . . Against an elder receive not an accusation except on the word of two or three witnesses. Those that sin reprove before all, that the rest may fear." Timothy is not one of the elders that rule well; neither is he one of "the rest," before whom a sinning elder is reprov'd. Now, if we find a college of equal elders at Ephesus, when Timothy is there, on what ground can it be maintained that the elders addressed at Miletus a short time before were not all of equal authority?

¹ chap. xviii.

² 1 Tim. iv. 12.

This question becomes doubly significant when we remember St. Paul's words on that occasion. Similarly, if Titus set up colleges of equal presbyters (elders) in the cities of Crete, on what ground can it be maintained that Paul and Barnabas acted otherwise on their first apostolic journey? The testimony of Eusebius, so far from proving that one of the elders was superior to the rest, rather confirms the obvious interpretation of the New Testament, by supposing that all the elders are of equal rank.

We now come to a more interesting and more difficult question, the origin of the monarchical episcopate. We know practically nothing about the first century history of any churches, except those founded by St. Paul, and those whose episcopal lists are preserved by Eusebius. As the latter form the subject of the next chapter, we shall confine our attention here to the Pauline foundations. In these communities I can find no certain trace of a monarchical bishop before the death of the apostle. The documents of the first century¹ know only a hierarchy of two grades, overseers and deacons. Their silence with regard to a third order, a diocesan monarchical episcopate, seems to be conclusive. The man who is the foundation and centre of ecclesiastical organization in the time of Ignatius, could not be ignored by all the documents of apostolic times, if he was generally known when these documents were written. The argument from silence is frequently a precarious one, but silence in such circumstances cannot be easily set aside. The most that one can maintain, in face of such a fact, is that monarchical bishops were known here and there.

The silence of St. Paul is particularly significant. If the Pauline churches were ruled by monarchical bishops, it is inexplicable why the apostle does not mention them in some of his epistles. He speaks of overseers and deacons, lays down rules for their guidance, and prescribes the qualities required in aspirants to office; but he never refers to him, who would have been the most important man in the local

¹ We need not reckon the *Apocalypse*, which was not written till about the year A.D. 100.

church, if he really existed. The monarchical bishop ought to be the centre of unity in his church ; it is his duty to keep the faithful together and prevent schisms and factions. This is the theme of all the Ignatian letters. Yet, when St. Paul finds the church of Corinth troubled with domestic factions, he makes no attempt to apply the obvious remedy of episcopal authority ; nor does he give us any hint that the bishop has neglected his duty. The same argument, can be urged from the epistle of Clement to the same church, half a century later. St. Paul seems to know of no higher local authority than the presbyteral college. Hence he writes " to the saints that are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons " ; when he has an important message for the Ephesians, he sends for the elders, and calls them the divinely-given rulers of the church ; when he sends his disciple to Crete, it is to organize churches, and appoint presbyteral colleges to rule them. All the data furnished by St. Paul go to show that the episcopal jurisdiction was exercised by a body corporate, not by an individual. The elders are subject to the apostle and his delegates, but the apostolic supervision is exercised, as we have already pointed out, in virtue of an extraordinary jurisdiction.

This interpretation of St. Paul is confirmed by the *Acts*. St. Luke was the companion and disciple of St. Paul ; he visited with his master nearly all the Pauline churches ; he knew intimately the nature of their organisation.

Now, St. Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabas established elders in every church. He afterwards introduces us to the elders of Ephesus ; he describes the circumstances of the discourse addressed to them at Miletus ; and records the words in which they are represented as the chief pastors of the church. His record shows the importance of the presbyteral college. On the other hand, he never gives us the least hint that there was any higher local ministry in the community ; he utterly neglects the centre of authority, if the monarchical episcopate really existed. St. Luke was not a man to mislead his readers ; on the contrary, it is his style to explain himself, where explanation is necessary. In these circumstances, historical accuracy, no less than a clear style, required that

he should mention the bishop, if a bishop existed. The silence of the disciple, when taken in conjunction with that of the master, is a fact worth consideration; it is a coincidence which cannot be easily explained away.

Those who believe that the monarchical episcopate was the primitive system of ecclesiastical government, rely chiefly on two lines of argument: the facts which meet us at the beginning of the second century; and the testimony of Eusebius. We shall reserve for another chapter the discussion of the facts in question. The testimony of Eusebius naturally falls into two parts: his theory of succession, and his episcopal lists for four particular churches. We shall examine in due course the value of these lists; for the present, it will suffice to point out that they do not represent Pauline foundations, and therefore do not bear on the question at present under discussion. It will be observed, moreover, in the course of our inquiry that these lists, however reliable, furnish no foundation for an argument from analogy. They represent, at most, an exceptional form of government.

There remains, then, the general theory of Eusebius. The writer begins his history with these words: "As it is my purpose to record the successions of the holy apostles, together with the times since our Saviour down to the present. . . . and what individuals in the most noted places presided over the Church. . . . I shall go back to the very origin and the earliest introduction of the dispensation of our Lord." What does Eusebius mean by "successions"? Does he mean merely the lines of monarchical bishops from the apostles to the bishops of his own day? This interpretation is evidently the only foundation for the argument we are now criticising. But listen to the words of Eusebius himself: "As it is impossible for us to give the numbers of those who became *pastors or evangelists*, during the *first immediate succession* from the apostles, in the churches throughout the world, we have recorded by name only those of whom we have received the traditional account."¹ Who are the pastors? And who are the evangelists? The fact that Eusebius speaks

¹ Eus. iii. 37.

of the first immediate succession from the apostles leads us to suppose that the pastors in question are those mentioned in the New Testament, that is, the overseers or elders. But whatever we think of the pastors, we must take account of another class of superiors, called "evangelists." The work of the evangelists is thus described: "After laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts, as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as pastors of the flocks, and committing to these the care of those recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations, with the grace and co-operation of God." Eusebius cannot, therefore, have meant to imply that it was only through diocesan bishops the succession was handed down. The first immediate successors of the apostles were in many cases evangelists; and much must have depended on the system of government which they set up in the mission-field. Here it is well to note that Eusebius does not say that they appointed "bishops" over the churches which they founded; he again uses the ambiguous term "pastors." From the example of Crete we know that the evangelists did not *always* establish a monarchical episcopate; from the epistles of St. Paul, the epistle of Clement, and the *Didache*, we know that in the beginning, at least, they did not *generally* do so. These documents, as we have seen, contemplate a collegiate episcopate; they know nothing of monarchical bishops.

It is quite true that Eusebius, himself a bishop, was a firm believer in the antiquity of his order; but his testimony about the episcopate of the first century is of extremely slender authority: "How many and which of these (disciples), actuated by a genuine zeal, were judged suitable to feed the churches established by these apostles (Peter and Paul) it is not easy to say, *any further than we can gather from the writings of Paul*. . . . It is narrated (*ιστορεῖται*) that Timothy first received the episcopate at Ephesus, as Titus was appointed over the churches of Crete. . . . But of the rest that accompanied Paul, Crescens is mentioned by him as sent to Gaul (Galatia?)."¹ Eusebius is not a man to omit

¹ iii. 4.

a reference to the writings or tradition of the "elders," whenever they support him ; but in the passage just quoted he has no such evidence to guide him. His whole statement is based on a vague "it is said," and a false interpretation of the pastoral epistles. We have much earlier evidence than the word of Eusebius, to prove that the episcopal succession of Ephesus was traced back, not to Timothy or St. Paul, but to St. John. If the historian had only taken into account his own chapter on the evangelists, he would never have set down Titus and Timothy as diocesan bishops. When he testifies to the episcopate of these men, he depends for his data, as he himself tells us, on the epistles of St. Paul. The facts we have considered at the beginning of this chapter suffice, I think, to dispose of his interpretation of St. Paul. Eusebius lived in an age when the monarchical episcopate was the only existing system of ecclesiastical government. The intellectual atmosphere produced by that fact has left its mark on the historical works of a man, whose critical acumen was not his strong point.

In the same chapter from which we have quoted, Eusebius goes on to say : " Besides, the Areopagite called Dionysius. . . is mentioned by Dionysius, another of the elders, and pastor of the church of Corinth, as the first bishop of the church of Athens." The letter referred to was written about the year 170 A.D. Eusebius has not preserved the exact words of the letter ; but we may be quite certain that, if it contained any reference to an Athenian tradition about the Areopagite, he would not fail to mention it. It may be added that we have no record of any other Athenian bishop till the middle of the second century. On the other hand, we read in the Acts : " But certain men joined him (Paul), among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite." Clement of Rome had written to the church of Corinth, from which the letter in question emanated, that the apostles established their first-fruits *ἐπίσκοποι* and deacons. These facts, when taken together, explain, I think, the tradition about the Areopagite. If there was really any foundation for the remark attributed to the bishop of Corinth, we should see in his words a reference

to one of the missions so frequently entrusted to his disciples by St. Paul, rather than to an appointment wholly at variance with the apostle's policy elsewhere. Outside the four episcopal lists, those are the only first century bishops mentioned by Eusebius. It will be admitted, I think, that his testimony is not a great objection to the view here put forward.

If tradition is quoted against this view, it can be quoted with at least equal effect in its favour. St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church, and one of her greatest authorities on Scriptural subjects, was a firm believer in the theory of a primitive diffused episcopate. Now, St. Jerome had practically the same facilities as Eusebius for knowing the primitive tradition;¹ he had, moreover, the advantage of Eusebius' labours.² Nevertheless he says: "An elder is therefore the same as an overseer; and before the instinct of the devil tempted people to say: 'I am of Paul, I of Apollo, I of Cephas,' the churches were governed by *the common counsel of the elders*. But when each (elder) began to think that those whom he baptised were his own and not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the whole world that one of the elders should be elected and placed over the rest; that to him the care of the whole church should pertain; and that the seeds of schism should be (thereby) removed. . . . As priests (elders) know, therefore, that they are subject by reason of the custom of the church; so let bishops understand that they are superior by custom rather than by any disposition of the Lord."³ And again: "If one was afterwards elected and placed over the rest, it was done as a remedy for schism; lest each, by drawing after him (a portion of the flock), should divide the church of Christ. . . . For, with the exception of ordination, what does a bishop do that a presbyter cannot do?"⁴ Now, it cannot be maintained that this was a speculation peculiar to St. Jerome. The learned Oratorian Morinus thus sums up the tradition on the question: "The opinion, therefore, and

¹ St. Jerome was born before Eusebius died.

² That Jerome was acquainted with the historical works of Eusebius is evident from the fact that he translated one of them into Latin.

³ Comm. in Tit. i.

⁴ Ep. to Evangelus.

the words of St. Jerome were fully accepted (*mirum in modum placuerunt*) by Anselm and all the Latin Fathers. To these we must add Hugh of St. Victor, Gratian, Honorius and Lombard. Wherefore, the opinion of Jerome was accepted by the whole Latin Church; and it was wrongly censured by many theologians, who imprudently condemned with Jerome almost the whole Latin Church."¹

Theodore of Mopsuestia, a contemporary of St. Jerome, gives us more precise information.² In the beginning, he says, the local churches were governed by priests, who were called elders or overseers. These were the highest order of office-bearers resident in the community. In each "eparchy" (or province), however, there was an "apostle,"³ whose duty it was to watch over the discipline of the clergy, and to ordain to ecclesiastical office, in all the churches within his jurisdiction. Such was the position of Titus in Crete and of Timothy at Ephesus. As the Gospel spread, and the number of the faithful increased, it was found necessary to multiply these "apostles." The multiplication, begun through necessity, was continued through ambition, till at last—to the detriment of the church, Theodore thinks—every little community had its own bishop. Whatever we think of Theodore's use of the word "apostle," or of the motives to which he attributes the extension of the monarchical episcopate, it must be admitted that he agrees with St. Jerome about the main fact under discussion. The diocesan monarchical episcopate was not, he thinks, the primitive system of ecclesiastical government. It will be observed, moreover, that, apart from the two reservations above mentioned, his summary of the facts harmonises well with the pastoral epistles, the epistle of Clement and the *Didache*. In these documents we meet with a diocesan ministry exercised by the elders or overseers, and a less localised ministry exercised by apostolic delegates, "distinguished men" or wandering missionaries.

¹De Ordinatione Part III.; Exer. III., Ch. II. 19.

²Commentary on Pastoral Epistles I. Tim. III.,

³It was afterwards found convenient, he tells us, to substitute the title "bishop" for "apostle."

Theodore's explanation reconciles the two ministries perfectly. Now, this is the testimony of a man who was himself a bishop, and who, cannot, therefore, be accused—as St. Jerome is sometimes accused—of a desire to extol the priesthood at the expense of the episcopate. The suspicion under which he rests, on account of his theological aberrations, can scarcely discredit his word on a matter of this kind. We are here discussing his testimony on a plain historical fact; and, as he merely confirms the tradition handed down by his contemporaries, Jerome and Ambrosiaster, there is no reason why he should not be treated as other independent witnesses. We are quite prepared to admit that the necessities of exegesis had much to do with the formation of the opinions of Jerome and Theodore. But does not Eusebius tell us himself that he bases his account of the episcopate in the Pauline churches on his interpretation of the Pauline epistles? Where the historical tradition is itself divided, we prefer to rely on the sources for our information. We put forward one stream of tradition, merely to meet the arguments based on another.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE EUSEBIAN LISTS.

IN the last chapter we inquired into the beginnings of ecclesiastical government in the Pauline churches ; we have now to institute a similar inquiry in regard to the non-Pauline foundations. We shall begin with the four great patriarchal sees, whose episcopal lists have been preserved by Eusebius ; the organisation of the churches of the provinces can be more conveniently dealt with at a later stage. The church of Rome, being the most important, has first claim on our attention.

The oldest Roman tradition connects the name of St. Peter with the foundation of the great metropolitan church. The name of St. Paul was coupled with that of St. Peter at an early date, though we know from his own epistle that he can be reckoned as a co-founder only in a very loose sense. There was already a flourishing Christian community at Rome, when St. Paul wrote his epistle ; but, as he had not yet visited the city, he tells us very little about its ecclesiastical organisation. He presupposes a ministry and a division of spiritual functions ; but he gives us no precise information, beyond a reference to the *προϊστάμενος*. The first epistle of Peter, which was written at Rome, establishes a presumption that the apostle had set up in the imperial city, as in the churches of Asia Minor, a college of elders. Clement confirms this presumption ; for he states that the apostles everywhere, in country and town, established their first-fruits as overseers and deacons of those who should believe. We have already discussed Clement's theory of apostolic succession. The Roman church evidently believed, at the end of the first century, that all ministerial power had been handed down by the apostles. The elders of Corinth—and the same may be said of the elders of Rome—had obtained their ministry, either from the apostles themselves, or from certain " distinguished

men," whom the apostles had empowered to transmit it. It is not difficult to realise, in the light of history, who the distinguished men were; they were the men invested with the plenitude of orders. The epistle of Clement leaves one question to be answered: was the church of Rome provided with a distinguished man¹?

Our earliest extant authority on this question is Irenaeus. In his great work, *Adversus Hæreticos*,² we read: "The blessed apostles (Peter and Paul), having founded and organised the church (of Rome), committed into the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus Paul makes mention in his epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anencletus, and after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them, might be said to have their preaching still echoing (in his ears), and their traditions before his eyes. . . . To this Clement succeeded Evaristus. Alexander followed Evaristus; then Sixtus was appointed, the sixth from the apostles; after him Telesphorus, who was gloriously martyred; then Hyginus; after him Pius; then Anicetus. Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius now holds the inheritance of the episcopate, in the twelfth place from the apostles." Irenaeus, writing about A.D. 180, had no doubt that the church of Rome had been ruled by a line of monarchical bishops since the death of the apostles.

To appreciate the value of this testimony, it is necessary to know something about the history of our witness, and the circumstances in which he wrote. "Irenaeus," says Lightfoot, "was probably the most learned christian of his time. He certainly had an acquaintance with heathen as well as christian literature. He had travelled far and wide. He was born and schooled in Asia Minor; he resided some time during middle life in Rome; he spent his later years in Gaul. He was in constant communication with foreign churches, on

¹ The word *ἐπίσκοπος* had not yet lost at Rome its original signification; hence the indefinite title "distinguished men."

² iii. 3.

various subjects of ecclesiastical and theological interest."¹ Irenaeus, therefore, was not a man to treat lightly a matter, which he considered of the highest historical and theological importance. Now, his catalogue of the Roman bishops is nothing less than the key-note of his whole treatise. Every heresy, he contends, is a departure from the apostolic tradition. The pure christian doctrine is to be found in the churches, in which the tradition has been handed down through an unbroken line of bishops, from the apostolic founder to the present day: "Since, however, it would be too tedious, in such a volume as this, to record the successions of all the churches, we put to confusion (all heretics) . . . by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles of the very great, very ancient, and universally known church, founded and organised at Rome, by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul; as also (by indicating) the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the succession of bishops. For every church must agree with this church, on account of its preeminent authority."² If his adversaries could show that Irenaeus was mistaken, in the succession on which he chiefly relied, his argument would lose its force, and his appeal would be in vain. The fact that, in such circumstances, he recorded only one line of succession, shows that his Roman catalogue was founded on ascertained historical facts.

The episcopal list handed down by Irenaeus, though the oldest now extant, was not the first to be compiled. During the pontificate of Anicetus (about A.D. 156-166), Hegesippus visited Rome, and drew up a similar list of the Roman bishops: "When I went to Rome, I drew up a list of succession³ as far as Anicetus, whose deacon Eleutherius (then) was. After Anicetus Soter succeeded; and after Soter Eleutherius." As Eusebius had before him the list of Hegesippus, as well as that of Irenaeus; and as he records the Roman succession as an established fact, without trace of doubt or contradiction

¹ *Apostolic Fathers*. Ignatius Vol. I. p. 392.

² *Adv. Haer.* iii. 3.

³ Vide Appendix B.

as to the names or order of the bishops ; it follows that the two lists agreed in every respect.

Hegesippus was a man who had travelled much ; he had visited all the principal churches of Christendom, with a view to comparing the traditions that had been handed down in different places.¹ He was, therefore, a man admirably suited to investigate the Roman succession ; it belonged to the work in which he was interested ; he had already made similar investigations in other churches.² In a city like Rome he could have found no great difficulty in tracing back the episcopacy for eighty or ninety years. The importance of the community, the frequency of its transactions with other churches, and the education and culture of many of its members, must have been responsible for the preservation of documents recording the most noteworthy events in the reign of each bishop. Even without the help of any such documents, the older members of the community could supply from memory the names of the bishops back to Clement. It would have been extraordinary, if even the most uneducated had not heard from their fathers the names of Anencletus and Linus.

We have, therefore, two independent lists drawn up within a century after the death of the apostles. In each case it was the interest of the antiquarian to verify his statements ; evidence was easily obtainable ; and both have come to the same conclusion. Their testimony is confirmed by Clement's connection with the church of Corinth. Dionysius, the bishop of Corinth, writing about A.D. 170 to Pope Soter, says : " Today . . . we read your epistle ; in reading which we shall have our minds stored with admonition, as we shall also from that written before to us by Clement." ³ There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, that the church of Rome was under a monarchical episcopate from the death of the apostles. Irenaeus states expressly that the apostles

¹ Heg. apud Euseb. iv. 22.

² It is practically certain that Eusebius copied the episcopal list of Jerusalem from the *Memoirs* of Hegesippus cfr. Eus. iv. 22., ii. 23., iii. 11. 20. 32.

³ Euseb. iv. 23.

appointed Linus to succeed them ; and I see no reason to doubt his testimony. The dual episcopate of Peter and Paul, which seems to be implied by Irenaeus and Eusebius, may cause at first sight a little surprise ; but it is interesting to note that Linus is reckoned by both as the first bishop. Eusebius tells us elsewhere that " Linus was the first *after Peter*, that obtained the episcopate of the Roman church."¹ We have already seen that it is only in a very limited sense that St. Paul can be regarded as co-founder with St. Peter. The fact that it was a monarchical, and not a dual episcopate, that they provided for, is sufficient indication that Linus succeeded primarily, not to two apostles, but to one.

Notwithstanding the evidence we have just examined, it is maintained by many Protestant scholars that the Roman church had no bishop, till the middle of the second century. The arguments for this theory are put forward concisely and forcibly by Lightfoot ; though he shrinks from drawing the logical conclusion from his own arguments. " Six of the letters of Ignatius," he says, " are full of exhortations urging obedience to the bishops : the letter to Rome is free from any such command. . . . It is addressed to Rome ; it assigns to this church a pre-eminence of rank as well as of love. . . . With all this importance attributed to the Romish (Roman ?) church, it is the more remarkable that not a word is said about the Roman bishop. Indeed there is not the faintest hint that a bishop of Rome existed at this time. . . . On the other hand, all the early notices of the Church of Rome point in the opposite direction. In the epistle of Clement . . . there is no mention of the bishop. The letter is written in the name of the church ; it speaks with the authority of the church . . . it pleads the authority, not of the chief minister, but of the whole body. The next document emanating from the Roman church after the assumed date of the Ignatian epistles is the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Here again we are met with similar phenomena. . . . As St. Jerome said long ago, the episcopal government was matured as a safeguard against heresy and schism. . . . It was not till the middle of the

¹ Eus. iii. 4.

second century that heresiarchs found it worth their while to make Rome the centre of operations. The Roman church is described in the Ignatian letter as 'strained clear from any foreign colour of doctrine.' Hence the episcopate, though doubtless it existed in some form or other in Rome, had not yet (it would seem) assumed the sharp and well-defined monarchical character, with which we are confronted in the Eastern churches."¹

The important limitation, with which Dr. Lightfoot hedges round a conclusion drawn from such thorough-going premises, shows how weak can be the argument from silence. If it proves anything in this case, it proves there was no bishop in Rome. Lightfoot has brought forward nothing to show that, while there was a bishop there, his episcopate was different in kind from that exercised in the Eastern churches. The awkwardness of his position is particularly evident, when we consider his appreciation of Irenaeus, and the value which he himself sets on the early Roman lists: "Nor can the tradition be treated otherwise than with the highest respect. We can trace it back to a few years later than the middle of the second century. It comes from Rome itself. It was diligently gathered there, and deliberately recorded by two several writers from different parts of Christendom. At the time when Hegesippus and Irenaeus visited the metropolis, members of the Roman church must still have been living, who in childhood or youth or even in early manhood had seen Clement himself."²

Dr. Lightfoot, I am sure, was quite sincere in making the summary of the case before us; but he appears to have been unconsciously influenced by the old question of Roman primacy. "To ourselves," he says, "the church of Rome has been so entirely merged in the bishop of Rome, that this silence is the more surprising." His inference is quite as surprising. Surely the "pre-eminence of rank as well as of love . . . this importance attributed to the Roman church" ought to be sufficient answer to the silence of Ignatius. In

¹ Apostolic Fathers. Ignatius Vol. I. p. 398.

² Clement Vol. I. p. 66.

his letter to the Trallians we read : " Without these three orders no church has a title to the name, (deserves to be called a church)."¹ Notwithstanding this fact, Ignatius praises the Roman church above all the churches of Asia Minor ; his praise is almost extravagant. It follows, I think, that he believed there was a bishop at Rome as at Smyrna, Ephesus and other " Eastern churches." Why, then, did he not mention the bishop in his letter ? Lightfoot himself supplies the answer : " ' Have a care for union ' is the writer's charge . . . heresies are rife ; schisms are imminent. To avert these dangers, loyalty to church rulers is necessary. . . . Asia Minor was, in the earliest ages, the hot-bed of false doctrine and schismatical teachers. . . . The Roman church is described in the Ignatian letter as strained clear from any foreign colour of doctrine." There is the explanation of the silence of Ignatius. The repeated exhortations to obedience were required in Asia Minor, because it was the hot-bed of heresy and schism ; no such exhortation would have been called for at Rome, till the middle of the second century. We may add that Ignatius insists almost as strongly on obedience to the presbyters and deacons, as on obedience to the bishop. Are we to conclude that the church of Rome—notwithstanding the positive testimony of Clement—had not even a college of elders ? Why did not Ignatius mention the presbyters and deacons ? Why did he not mention the semi-bishop postulated by Lightfoot himself ?

The silence of the *Shepherd of Hermas* need not cause any difficulty. This document was written at a time when the writer's brother, Pius, was bishop of Rome ;² its silence can hardly imply, therefore, a plural episcopate. During the reign of Anicetus, the successor of Pius, Hegesippus drew up his episcopal list ; and Irenaeus made his investigations only a few years later. Are we to pit the silence of the *Shepherd* against the positive testimony of these writers ? Dr. Lightfoot, as we have remarked, waters down his contention towards the end of his summary ; but he maintains an essential

¹ Trall. iii. I give Lightfoot's own translation and paraphrase.

² Muratorian Fragment.

difference between the episcopal office in Rome, and in the Eastern churches. He overlooks the fact that both Hege-sippus and Irenaeus were Easterns, and that it was precisely as guardians of the true apostolic tradition the bishops of Rome had an interest for them. He himself tells us that it was in exactly the same capacity—as guardians of pure doctrine—the bishops of Asia Minor had the chief interest for Ignatius. I fail to see how the *Shepherd* or the Ignatian epistles support the theory of Lightfoot.

The silence of Clement is not difficult to explain. He mentions a divinely appointed hierarchy; he proclaims the principle of apostolic succession; he records the arrangements made by the apostles to perpetuate the ministry. All this was relevant to his chief purpose in writing, the establishment of peace in the church of Corinth. But what purpose would have been served, by describing in detail the organization of the church of Rome? To argue that the letter should have been sent out in the name of the chief pastor is to judge the epistolary style of the first century by the standard of the twentieth. Letters of common ecclesiastical interest were generally sent from church to church, not from individual to individual. Ignatius addresses six of his letters to communities, only one to a bishop. The apostolic epistles of the New Testament are nearly all addressed to communities; though they would be addressed to the *elders* mentioned therein, if they were written at the present day. Similarly letters were sent out in the name of the community, even though the ecclesiastical superiors alone were responsible for writing them. We may recall the words of the *Shepherd of Hermas*: "Write two copies; send one to Clement, and the other to Grapte. Clement will send it to foreign cities, for this is his duty."¹ The church of Philippi likewise wrote to Polycarp after the visit of Ignatius; and Polycarp addressed his reply to the community.

There were special reasons why Clement should suppress his own name. The persecution of Domitian was just coming to a close, when the epistle was written. It would have been

¹ Vis. ii. 4.

extremely imprudent, in the circumstances, to risk the name of the bishop of Rome, in a letter which had to travel to Corinth. If the government was prepared to persecute the ordinary faithful, we may be sure it would leave no stone unturned to capture the head of the whole Christian organization. In the second place, we must take account of the temper and character of the Corinthians. If they had rebelled against their own local superiors, they might be expected to resist the interference of a foreign bishop, who would vaunt his authority. Prudence was not less necessary in the circumstances than authority. Clement very rightly kept his personal authority in the background; he spoke, to use his own expression, with "intense moderation."¹

Dr. Lightfoot is nevertheless mistaken, when he says that the epistle "pleads the authority, not of the chief minister, but of the whole community." If this contention were true, how could the epistle have been so definitely connected with the name of Clement—a name which is not even once mentioned throughout the letter? We have it on the most reliable testimony, that the epistle represented Clement's authority; and the Corinthians must have known this from the three Roman delegates who were sent with it to Corinth. Dionysius, writing to Pope Soter seventy years later, says: "Today we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we read your epistle. In reading which we shall always have our mind stored with admonition, as we shall also from that written to us before by Clement."² Here we are told by the bishop of Corinth itself that the letters of Soter and Clement were read in the church on Sunday; and the admonitions are attributed not to "the whole body" of the Roman church, but to its bishops. About the same time, Irenaeus drew up his list of the Roman bishops; and this is the one fact recorded about Clement—he wrote a letter to the Corinthians. Irenaeus had the authority of the Roman tradition for this fact; and it agrees exactly with the tradition of Corinth.

It used to be urged by Protestant scholars, that the

¹ vide chapters 58. 62. The translation is Lightfoot's.

² Eus. iv. 23.

divergences of the Roman lists prove that they are of no historical value. Investigation and criticism have disposed of this objection. It is now admitted that the earlier Greek writers, Hegesippus and Irenaeus, give the correct list, while the later and divergent Latin writers all follow a Latin version, which blunders owing to a misunderstanding of the name Anencletus. The chronology of the early papacy is an independent question, and matters little for our present purpose. Irenaeus and Hegesippus were concerned merely with the succession; they have left us no chronological details. It is simply beating the air, to quote the chronological inconsistencies of later writers, with a view to discrediting the earlier and reliable Greek lists.¹

We may now pass on to the church of Jerusalem; but before we examine the list handed down by Eusebius, it may be well to retrace our steps a little. We have already seen the difference between ordinary diocesan jurisdiction, and the superior jurisdiction of the apostles and their delegates. The apostles were not diocesan bishops, in the ordinary sense of the word; when they settled in a community, they were monarchical superiors, indeed, but their authority was different in kind from that of the local superiors. They were still apostles; and they ruled even the local church in virtue of their supreme jurisdiction. Irenaeus and Eusebius both respect this distinction. They omit, therefore, the founder of the line from their episcopal lists; they make the founder's successor the first bishop. Clement was appointed "the *third* bishop of this church," though he was preceded by Anencletus, Linus and St. Peter: "On the death of Evodius, who was the first bishop of Antioch, Ignatius was appointed the second. . . . In the fourth year of Domitian, Anianus, the first bishop of Alexandria died. He was succeeded by Avilius, who was the second bishop of that city."² We might expect a similar calculation in connection with the church of Jerusalem; indeed the necessity for making the founder's

¹ An exhaustive account (with bibliography) of the early Roman succession can be found in Lightfoot's *Clement* Vol. I.

² Eusebius iii., 4., 22., 24.

jurisdiction superepiscopal was much greater at Jerusalem than at Alexandria; for the Jewish elders exercised there, as we have already seen, the ordinary authority of the diocese. Eusebius, however, takes a different view of the case. James, we are told, was not one of the twelve, but one of the seventy disciples; ¹ he did not, therefore, exercise universal jurisdiction. He was not merely a disciple, however; he was also one of our Lord's brethren. It was this fact, apparently, that induced our Lord to appoint him bishop of Jerusalem: "James, being the first that received the episcopate of Jerusalem from our Saviour Himself, as the Scripture shows that he was generally called the brother of Christ."²

Whether these are the speculations of Eusebius himself or of an earlier writer, they do not appear to have much historical foundation. Apart from its intrinsic improbability, the story of the episcopal appointment by our Lord Himself does not harmonise with the *Acts*. The primitive church at Jerusalem lived for a considerable time under the direction of the twelve apostles. St. Peter was the president of the community, as is evident from the opening chapters of the *Acts*; and St. John appears to have been the next in importance. It was only when the apostles dispersed, after some years, that James took over the supreme supervision of the Jewish church.

All the evidence, moreover, points to James as one of the twelve. We know that the three brothers, James, Jude and Simon, were relatives ³ of our Lord; and we can infer, from the gospel of St. John,⁴ that they accompanied Christ during his public ministry. Now, these three names occur side by side in the lists of the twelve; Jude being described as brother of James (to distinguish him from the traitor), and Simon being placed between the two.⁵ St. Paul describes James of Jerusalem, "the brother of the Lord," as an apostle and pillar of the church, connecting his name with that of St. Peter in one case, with those of Peter and John in the other.⁶ James wielded great authority, even in the beginning

¹ Euseb. i. 12.

² *ib.* vii. 19.

³ Matt. xiii. 55.

⁴ John vii. 3.

⁵ Acts i. 13.

⁶ Gal. i. 18-19., ii. 9.

of St. Paul's missionary career.¹ St. Luke introduces him to us as the chief spokesman, after St. Peter, at the council of Jerusalem; St. Jude finds it expedient to recommend himself as the brother of James in his epistle. When we consider St. Luke's style as a historian, it is difficult to understand how he could have passed over a man of such importance, without giving us the least hint as to who he was, or what was the origin of his authority. These considerations when taken together, afford substantial proof that James was the apostle and brother of Jude mentioned in the first chapter of the *Acts*. We thus find an explanation of his apostleship, his consanguinity with Jude and with our Lord, and the omission of comment on his name in subsequent passages of the *Acts*. Catholic tradition, moreover, has been always in favour of regarding James as one of the twelve; and there appears to be no solid ground for regarding him otherwise.

One has only to read the passage,² which Eusebius quotes from Hegesippus, to see what legends had grown up around the name of the apostle, as early as the middle of the second century. Eusebius tells us, on his own account, that "so admirable a man was James, and so celebrated among all for his justice, that even the wiser of the Jews were of opinion, that this (martyrdom of James) was the cause of the immediate siege of Jerusalem, which happened to them for no other reason than the crime against him." He quotes Hegesippus to the effect that "immediately after this (καὶ αὐτοῦς) Vespasian besieged them." We know, from data supplied on the same page, that seven years elapsed between the two events.³ The piety and austerity of James, his great popularity and influence with the unconverted Jews, and finally, his glorious martyrdom made a deep impression on the Jewish Christians, and set the popular imagination at work. For the succeeding generation, James was above all a Jewish Christian; his interest was confined almost

¹ Gal. ii. 11 seq., Acts. xv. 13 seq., xxi. 18.

² Eus. ii. 23.

³ Josephus apud Euseb. ii. 23. James was martyred during the interregnum between Festus and Albinus, that is, A.D. 62.

exclusively to Jerusalem, the temple and the law. The destruction of the city by Titus, followed by its profanation under Adrian, together with the wholesale banishment of the Jewish population, turned men's minds to the reign of James as the golden age of Judæo-Christianity. Legend busied itself with his name; his universal mission was forgotten; but popular fancy supplied him with the necessary authority, by attributing his episcopal appointment to our Lord Himself.

These facts show the value of the considerations, which induced Eusebius to depart from his usual method of calculation, in setting down James as the first bishop of Jerusalem. A comparison with his other lists leaves no doubt that he would have given Symeon this honour, if he regarded James as an apostle. James was indeed a monarchical superior; he was, moreover, invested with the full power of orders. For reasons already referred to, we think it would be a mistake to regard him as a diocesan bishop. The scanty data that have come down seem to indicate, as we shall see presently, that he exercised over Judea, and perhaps all Palestine, superepiscopal jurisdiction, similar to that which Titus exercised in Crete.

Eusebius tells us that James was succeeded by a line of monarchical bishops in the see of Jerusalem: "After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem, which immediately followed, the report is that the surviving apostles and disciples of our Lord came together from all parts, together with those who were related to our Lord according to the flesh. These consulted together, to determine who should be pronounced worthy to succeed James. They all declared Symeon, the son of Cleophas, worthy of the episcopal seat there."¹ Justus succeeded Symeon; Zachæus succeeded Justus; and so on till the Judæo-Christian line failed.

With the rebuilding of the city by Adrian in A.D. 135, a new era begins for the church of Jerusalem. Hitherto the community was composed almost exclusively of Judæo-Christian members, still much attached to the law of Israel.

¹ Eus. iii. 11.

These Christians, no less than the unconverted Jews, fell under the decree of Adrian, which forbade any Israelite to enter the city or suburbs of Jerusalem: "The city of the Jews was thus reduced to a state of abandonment for them, and, being totally stripped of its ancient inhabitants and peopled with strangers, became a Roman colony. . . . And when a church had been founded there by the Gentiles, the first bishop after those of the circumcision was Mark."¹ With Mark begins a long line of Gentile-Christian bishops, whose episcopate it is unnecessary to discuss in these pages.

Whatever we think of the chronology and circumstances of Symeon's election, the main fact of his succession to James can scarcely be disputed. Hegesippus, from whom Eusebius takes his facts, was himself a Jewish Christian,² and most probably a native of Judea. He was acquainted, as Eusebius tells us, with the written and unwritten traditions of the Jews; and he gave the church of Jerusalem a large place in his *Memoirs*. Now, Hegesippus tells us that the deification of Antinous (about A.D. 122) took place in his own time;³ his memory carried him back, therefore, to within a quarter of a century of the death of Symeon. Those who were old men when Hegesippus was a boy, must have remembered the death of James; those who were in middle life had known Symeon. Hence, oral tradition alone could have supplied him with the names of the first bishops, even if no documents had been preserved. Hegesippus, moreover, made it his special study to inquire into the traditions handed down by the succession of bishops in various churches; this was the object of his tour through Christendom. When we consider the interest he took in this particular question; and when we remember his proximity to the events he records, and the facilities he possessed for obtaining reliable information, we can only conclude that Hegesippus is an unimpeachable witness to the episcopal succession in the church of Jerusalem. We may suppose, indeed, that his *Memoirs* contained chronological inaccuracies; oral tradition is always liable to err in this respect; and the danger was particularly

¹ Eus. iv. 6.² Eus. iv. 22.³ Eus. iv. 8.

great at a time when people had no fixed era to count from. We may also admit that Hegesippus mixed up, to some extent, legend and history; but notwithstanding all this, his testimony for the central fact is perfectly reliable. It was morally impossible for a man in the position of Hegesippus to be misled on the chief point of his investigations—the existence of a line of monarchical bishops. His own memory carried him back to within sixty years of the death of James. The older members of the community could not have failed to know whether the church was governed during that period by a monarchical bishop or a college of elders.

The number of Judæo-Christian bishops of Jerusalem has led many scholars to believe that several must have reigned together. The data do not appear to warrant the conclusion. Eusebius clearly makes Symeon a monarchical bishop; he gives us roughly the dates of his accession and martyrdom, allowing him a reign of about thirty years.¹ It is only after Symeon the congestion begins. The remaining bishops of the circumcision, thirteen in number, have to be fitted into a period of about thirty years. This fact has not escaped the attention of Eusebius: "We have not ascertained that the times of the bishops in Jerusalem have been regularly preserved on record, for tradition says they all lived a very short time."² A series of thirteen bishops with an average reign of only two years is surprising, indeed, but not impossible. We can even find a parallel in the history of the papacy. The times were turbulent; and the Christians were persecuted, at least towards the end of this period, by the party of the insurgent Barchochebas.³

We find, however, a much more natural solution of this problem in a consideration of the events, which followed the destruction of the city. It will be noticed that Eusebius expressly says that he has no data to determine when any of the last Judæo-Christian bishops reigned. He has found on

¹ Symeon was elected about the time of the siege of Jerusalem and was martyred in the reign of Trajan. Eus. iii. 11., 32.

² Eus. iv. 5.

³ Justin 1. Apol. 31.

record only their names and the order of succession. A congestion of reigns arises only on the supposition that Judas, the last of the line, died before A.D. 135. This supposition, in turn, rests on another. If the Judæo-Christian bishops lived and ruled *in* Jerusalem, the last of them must have disappeared before Mark, the first of the Gentile line. This is precisely what Eusebius supposes to have happened: "We have not ascertained that the times of the bishops *in Jerusalem* have been preserved on record." This is the basis of the whole objection against us. Now, what are the facts?

In the first place, we may remark that Eusebius does not imply that Mark was the successor of Judas. Mark was the first of a new line in a wholly new church. Similarly, the Judæo-Christian succession was not carried on by the Gentile bishops, but simply *failed*: "In the meantime as the bishops of the circumcision failed, it may be necessary to recount them in order."¹ In the second place, the bishops of the circumcision cannot have ruled *in* Jerusalem. Eusebius himself tells us that the Christian population evacuated the city before the siege in A.D. 70. "A return to Jerusalem was out of the question; it had been so completely razed to the ground, that it was difficult to believe that it was ever inhabited; and for sixty years the camp of the tenth legion was the only sign of life."² Even when Adrian rebuilt the city, return was still impossible: "The whole nation from that time were totally prohibited by the decree and the commands of Adrian from even entering the country about Jerusalem; so that they could not behold the soil of their fathers, even from a distance."³ In these circumstances the old Judæo-Christian community was forced to remain at Pella. Did these Christians suddenly give up the episcopal form of government, under which they had lived so long? There is not the slightest evidence, nor probability, that they did. Two lines of bishops must have existed simultaneously,

¹ Eus. iv. 5.

² Duchesne *History of Early Church*, Chap. IX.

³ Eus. iv. 6.

till the line of the circumcision failed. How long this state of things continued, and what led to the "failure" we are unable to say. It is possible that the Jewish Christians returned to Jerusalem as soon as the decree of Adrian fell into disuse.

However we explain this chronological difficulty, the episcopate of Symeon remains an established fact. We may add that it is altogether improbable that a community, which had lived so long under a monarchical ruler, reverted to a plural system of government. Such a theory is incompatible with the findings of Hegesippus and Eusebius: "The *first* then was James; after whom the *second* was Symeon, the *third* Justus, the *fourth* Zachaeus;"¹ and so on. These men evidently ruled in strict succession. Our investigations seem to warrant the conclusion, that at Jerusalem, as at Rome, the first bishop was the immediate successor of an apostle.

We shall next consider the organization of the church of Alexandria. Though no very early account of the conversion of Alexandria has come down to us, there is good reason for supposing that the Gospel found its way thither at an early date. There was always a large number of Alexandrian Jews in Jerusalem at this period;² and the number was swelled at regular intervals by the people who came to the great festival. We can infer from the opening chapter of the *Acts* that many of those were converted; and they naturally proclaimed the Gospel to their fellow-Jews on their return to Alexandria. It was probably in this way that the Alexandrian missionary, Apollos, was converted; for, when he came to Ephesus, he "had been instructed in the way of the Lord."³ It was only after the arrival of St. Mark, however, that the Gospel spread to any considerable extent in Alexandria. Eusebius says: "The same Mark, being the first that went to Egypt, proclaimed there the gospel which he had written, and was the first to establish churches in Alexandria."⁴ This statement is based, most probably, on the *Chronicle* of Julius Africanus (A.D. 221), though there is

¹ Eus. iv. 5.

² Acts vi. 9.

³ Acts xviii. 24.

⁴ Eus. ii. 16.

reason to believe that Theophilus of Antioch had already recorded the same tradition."¹ Jerome, Epiphanius, and many later writers also refer to Mark's Alexandrian mission. There was a strong tradition, therefore, connecting the name of Mark with the church of Alexandria.

The dates assigned to Mark's mission in the *Chronicle*² of Eusebius are the *Olympiads* 205 and 210, that is, A.D. 41-45 and 61-65. In the *History*, only the final date is fixed: "Nero was now in the eighth year of his reign, when Anianus succeeded the apostle and evangelist Mark, in the administration of the church of Alexandria." This gives us the year A.D. 62. Now these dates are incompatible, not only with the data supplied by Eusebius himself, but also with those supplied by the *Acts* and the epistles of St. Paul. If Mark wrote his gospel before he went to Alexandria; and if he wrote it in the circumstances described by Eusebius—*i.e.* after he had become a disciple of St. Peter at Rome—the starting point, A.D. 42 (about), is out of the question.

We know from the New Testament³ that Mark was at Antioch and at Jerusalem about A.D. 46; that he went to Cyprus with Paul and Barnabas about A.D. 48; that he returned to Antioch the following year; and again went to Cyprus with Barnabas about A.D. 50. If Eusebius is correct in his conjectures, we must leave room, after this Cyprian mission, for Mark's Petrine discipleship, his residence at Rome, and the writing of his gospel. Mark was still in Rome, when Peter wrote his first epistle (about A.D. 63); he was in Asia Minor when Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy (about A.D. 66). From a comparison of Eusebius's records, it is clear, I think, that the succession of Anianus in the eighth year of Nero (A.D. 62) implies that Mark had just then died. This is evidently Jerome's interpretation of the passage;

¹ Malalas, a chronicler of the sixth century, quotes Theophilus to the effect that "At the death of Mark . . . Anianus succeeded him." As Theophilus is mentioned with Clement of Alexandria, it is most probably the bishop of Antioch that is meant. Theophilus was Clement's elder contemporary; He wrote about A.D. 180.

² The edition quoted is Migne's *Patr. Graec.* vol. xix.

³ Acts xii. 25., xiii. 5., xv. 39., 1. Peter v. 13., 2. Tim. iv. 11

for he says : ¹ " Mark died in the eighth year of Nero, and was buried at Alexandria."

The chronological scheme of Eusebius can scarcely be maintained. The episcopal list of Alexandria appears to have been handled in the same manner as that of Rome. The early chroniclers handed down only the names of the bishops ; later writers supplied the dates of their reigns, without reliable data. It was the interest of Alexandrian chroniclers to place the foundation of their episcopal see as early as possible ; for even as early as the third century, the bishop of Alexandria claimed a wide sphere of influence in the Eastern Church. It is worth noting that the compiler of the *Chronicon Paschale*, though he generally follows Eusebius, nevertheless writes in this case : " Under this Trajan, Mark the evangelist, who had become bishop of Alexandria, suffered martyrdom." This account can at least be reconciled with the New Testament documents. The fact that the *Chronicon* diverges so notably from Eusebius, and diverges in a direction which we should least expect, gives some ground for supposing that the compiler had at hand some evidence that was inaccessible to Eusebius. If we suppose that Eusebius is approximately correct in attributing to Mark a twenty years Alexandrian mission, the account given by the *Chronicon* becomes highly probable. Even if Mark set out for Alexandria *immediately* after the death of St. Paul, a mission of twenty years duration would bring him to within nine years of Trajan's accession. If he first visited the churches of Cyprus and Asia Minor, to which he had already given so much labour—and this is what he might be expected to do—he would find his way to Alexandria some time between 70 and 80 A.D.

Notwithstanding these chronological difficulties, we must take account of the Alexandrian list. The succession of bishops and the historical setting, in which it is placed, are independent questions. The blunders of chroniclers in regard to the second question scarcely affect the value of their testimony in regard to the first. There was evidently an early and widespread tradition among Eastern scholars,

¹ De viris illustribus viii.

that Mark was the founder of the Alexandrian see,¹ and that he was succeeded by a line of monarchical bishops. What could have suggested the name of Mark, if he did not really preach at Alexandria? He had no secular connection with Egypt, so far as we can trace; and the New Testament, so far from establishing a spiritual connection, rather points in the opposite direction. The fact that an early, widespread, and consistent tradition connects the conversion of Alexandria with the name of a stranger, rather than with that of the Alexandrian Apollos, or one of the Cyrenean missionaries mentioned in the *Acts*²—that fact alone shows that the tradition was based on a solid historical foundation. The same authority, which testifies to the Alexandrian mission of Mark, also testifies to the succession of a line of monarchical bishops, beginning after the death of the evangelist. We cannot trace this testimony to its source, but we can trace it sufficiently far, to see that it has considerable authority behind it. Let us see how it harmonises with the earliest reliable Alexandrian documents.

Clement, who was appointed president of the Catechetical School about A.D. 189, not only testifies to the existence of a threefold hierarchy in his own day,³ but he knows of no older system of ecclesiastical organisation. He seems to have never realised that ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος were once synonymous terms. "Innumerable commands like these," he says, "are written in the Sacred Books, appertaining to chosen persons, some to presbyters, others to bishops, others to deacons, others to widows, of whom we shall have another opportunity of speaking."⁴ When we consider that Clement was one of the most learned men of his day—and learned especially in tradition—and that he lived in Alexandria itself, within a century of the foundation of the Alexandrian church; his language must be taken as guaranteeing the existence of a monarchical episcopate from the beginning. His testimony is particularly significant, if we suppose that

¹ Vide Appendix C.

² Acts xi. 20., xiii. 1., xviii. 24.

³ "The grades of bishops, presbyters, and deacons in the Church I believe to be copies of the angelic glory." *Stromata* vi. 13.

⁴ *Paed.* iii. 12.

Mark came to Alexandria only after the year 70 A.D. ; for then, Clement must have known men who remembered the appointment of the first bishop.

The testimony of Origen, Clement's pupil, is equally clear : " The church of God at Athens is a meek and *stable* body. . . whereas the assembly of the Athenians is given to sedition . . . And you may say the same of the church at Alexandria. . . In like manner, in comparing the council of the church of God with the council in any city, you will find that certain *councillors* of the church are worthy to rule in the city of God. . . . And so too you must compare the ruler of the church of God in each city, with the ruler in the city."¹ Origen here clearly distinguishes the presbyters and the bishop, in a passage where he calls special attention to the *stability* of the church of Alexandria, as opposed to the fickleness of the civic assembly. The episcopate was no novelty in Origen's time. Again, he says : " A man, who desires the office of a bishop for the sake of glory with men or of flattery from men, or for the sake of gain . . . a bishop of this kind does not desire a good work, nor can he be without reproach, nor temperate, nor sober-minded, as he is intoxicated with glory, and intemperately satiated with it. And the same also you will say about the presbyters and deacons."² By taking the ἐπίσκοπος of the *Pastoral Epistles* in the strict sense, Origen here shows that he knew of no older system of ecclesiastical organization, than that under which he lived. Again, he speaks of those who are " puffed up because they are educated in Christianity ; especially when they can boast of *fathers and forefathers* (πρόγονοι), who were considered worthy of the dignity of the episcopal throne in the church, or of the honour of the presbyterate, or of the deaconship unto the people of God."³ The Alexandrian episcopate had evidently come down from time immemorial ; and the church had no recollection of any earlier form of government. We may take it as practically certain, therefore, that St. Mark was succeeded by a monarchical bishop.

¹ Contra Celsum. iii. 30.

² Comm. xi. 15. in Matt.

³ *ibid.* xv. 26.

The last of Eusebius's four great lists deals with the church of Antioch. It may be well to recall what we know of the first spread of the Gospel among the Antiochenes. We read in the *Acts*: "Those who had been dispersed by the persecution, which arose on the occasion of Stephen, went about as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none but the Jews. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene; who, when they came to Antioch, spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and they were converted to the Lord. And the news came to the ears of those in Jerusalem; and they sent Barnabas to Antioch."¹ Barnabas was subsequently joined by St. Paul, and both laboured together for a whole year. St. Luke does not tell us when the local hierarchy was established at Antioch, or what form it assumed when it was established. These are the questions answered by Eusebius.

Under the third year of Caligula ² (A.D. 39), we find in his *Chronicle* the following record: "The apostle Peter, when he had founded the church of Antioch, was sent to Rome; and there preaching the Gospel remained twenty-five years bishop of the same city." Two years later, according to the same chronicle, Evodius was appointed first bishop of Antioch. Evodius was succeeded by Ignatius; Ignatius by Heron; and so on down to the writer's own time. As Eusebius does not quote his authority for these records, it is impossible to say where he got his facts.³

Whatever we think of his source of information, it must be admitted that the names he mentions represent men who really governed the church of Antioch. Ignatius, the second on the list, was certainly a monarchical bishop; and his letters create a strong presumption that he had a predecessor

¹ Acts xi. 19 seq.

² In the *History* and in St. Jerome's version of the *Chronicle* St. Peter's journey to Rome is placed in the reign of Claudius about A.D. 42.

³ Harnack thinks it is certain that he copied from Julius Africanus. vide *Chronology*.

in the office. This presumption is confirmed by Origen, who tells us that Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch. The chronology is, however, an important consideration in this case; for, though Eusebius speaks of the bishops of Antioch as successors of St. Peter, he nevertheless implies that a considerable interregnum elapsed, between the departure of St. Peter and the appointment of Evodius. What are we to think of the chronological scheme proposed by Eusebius?

If St. Peter's visit to Antioch took place at the time assigned to it by Eusebius, it is surprising that St. Luke says nothing about it, in the eleventh chapter of the *Acts*. He there describes the first spread of the Gospel at Antioch; he records the circumstances that led up to it; he tells us of the Cyprian and Cyrenean christians, who announced the glad tidings; he mentions the effect of the news at Jerusalem, the mission of Barnabas, and finally the united labours of Barnabas and Paul. It is difficult to understand how St. Luke could have ignored St. Peter in a sketch so complete, if St. Peter was the real founder of the church of Antioch.

The sequence of events, moreover, both in the *Acts* and in the *History* of Eusebius, shows that St. Peter was still in Jerusalem, during the first years of the reign of Claudius.¹ Barnabas had gone to Antioch, visited Tarsus, returned to Antioch, preached there for a year, and relieved the distress at Jerusalem, before Peter "went to another place." Nor can it be maintained that St. Peter had founded the church of Antioch before his imprisonment at Jerusalem. St. Luke, who records the short visit of Peter and John to Samaria, says nothing of the important visit to Antioch, though he describes at length the first spread of the Gospel in that city. Eusebius, moreover, expressly tells us that St. Peter went from Antioch to Rome; so that his visit to Antioch cannot have taken place till after his imprisonment. The evidence is altogether against the supposition that St. Peter was the founder of the church of Antioch.

Again, if Evodius became bishop of Antioch about A.D. 42-44, it is inexplicable why St. Luke does not mention him

¹ Acts xi. 30., xii. 1., Euseb. ii. 8-10.

among those who were ministering to the Lord, when the Holy Ghost called Paul and Barnabas.¹ Ignatius, the successor of Evodius, cannot imagine an assembly of the faithful, in which the bishop is not the leading figure. Here there is not the slightest trace of a bishop, though St. Luke mentions the names of the five chief "ministers." The omission of any reference to his name, in connection with the events which led up to the council of Jerusalem, is not less surprising. One of a bishop's chief duties, according to Ignatius, is to guard the deposit of the true faith; yet there is not the slightest trace of the interference of a bishop in the dispute caused by Judaizers at Antioch about A.D. 49. Paul and Barnabas were still, and continued afterwards to be, the principal figures in the church of Antioch. Antioch was their head-quarters from A.D. 44 to A.D. 51; and they appear to have been absent only for two short periods, at the council of Jerusalem, and on the first apostolic journey. In view of these facts, it is extremely improbable that Evodius was appointed before the beginning of the second apostolic journey of St. Paul.

On the other hand, the epistles of Ignatius imply that the monarchical episcopate at Antioch stretched back well into the first century. It is certain moreover, that at the beginning of the third century the bishop of Antioch claimed to be the successor of St. Peter.² We have no data to determine what foundation existed for this claim. Was Evodius appointed during St. Peter's visit to Antioch,³ after the council of Jerusalem? There is not much reason for thinking so. It is much more probable that St. Peter merely paid a short visit to the community on this occasion, and did not interfere with the arrangements made by Paul and Barnabas. The latter had been long connected with the church of Antioch; they had made it the centre of their apostolic activity; and they were actually present on this very occasion. St. Peter,

¹ Acts xiii. 1. seq.

² Origen, who visited Antioch about A.D. 226, writes: "I mean Ignatius, the second bishop of Antioch after the blessed Peter." Hom. 6 in Luc.

³ Galat. ii. 11.

on the other hand, seems to have had very little connection with this particular church.¹ It will be noticed that although he addresses the christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in his first epistle, he says nothing of the neighbouring province of Syria, or of Antioch, its capital. This view is confirmed by Eusebius, who implies that St. Peter was already two years in Rome, when the first bishop of Antioch was appointed. If this conjecture of Eusebius is correct—and the difficulty it causes shows there is some foundation for it—we can only conclude that St. Peter had nothing to do with the establishment of the episcopate at Antioch.

The Eusebian list is, therefore, very unsatisfactory. Though it gives us only two bishops before A.D. 110, it tells us nothing about them but their names. It represents them as successors² of St. Peter, and yet leaves an interregnum of two years between the apostle and Evodius. It furnishes no data to determine when Ignatius became bishop, or how long he reigned; and in the only chronological notice which it attaches to the name of Evodius, it is almost certainly wrong. If we wish to investigate the beginnings of the monarchical episcopate at Antioch, we must rely on the epistles of Ignatius, and on the testimonies about the activity of St. John.

¹ Eusebius refers, perhaps, to some short visit, during which St. Peter ordained elders at Antioch. This would explain the presence of teachers or elders (v. chap. x.) empowered to impose hands on Paul and Barnabas.

² Euseb. iii. 35.

CHAPTER IX.—THE MONARCHICAL EPISCOPATE.

WE have already inquired into the early organisation of the Pauline churches ; and we found that, during the lifetime of the apostle, they were governed by a college of elders or overseers. When we pass on to the time of Ignatius, we find a very different state of affairs. The three grades of the hierarchy are now mentioned together for the first time. The presbyteral college is no longer the supreme local authority ; the bishop is the central figure of the Christian community. " I advise you," says Ignatius, " be ye zealous to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God, and the presbyters (elders) after the likeness of the council of the apostles, with the deacons who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ."¹ To the Trallians he writes : " In like manner, let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and the college of the apostles. Apart from these, there is not even the name of a church ; concerning which things I am persuaded that you think in like manner."² The presbyteral college is no longer God's representative in the church ; Ignatius always compares the bishop to God and Christ, the presbyters to the council of God and the college of apostles.

The bishop holds a unique position in the local hierarchy ; he is the centre of unity, authority and ministerial activity : " For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop."³ And again : " Shun division, as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbyteral college as the

¹ Magn. vi.² Trall. iii.³ Philad. iii.

apostles ; and to the deacons pay respect as to God's commandment. Let no man do anything pertaining to the church apart from the bishop. Let that be considered a valid¹ Eucharist which is under the bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be, even as where Jesus Christ is, there is the universal Church. It is not lawful, apart from the bishop, either to baptize or to hold a love-feast ; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God." These are strong words ; they leave no doubt whatever that the bishop spoken of by Ignatius is a monarchical bishop in the fullest sense of the word. It is to be noted, moreover, that Ignatius regards the hierarchy as essentially threefold ; without a hierarchy of three grades, no church is worthy of the name. Writing to the Trallians, while their bishop is with him, he tells them that he believes they are of the same opinion. Two of the letters just quoted² were written to churches, through which he had already passed ; and represent therefore the belief of these churches.

The Ignatian letters prove, therefore, that before the year 117 A.D. the monarchical episcopate was an accomplished fact, not only in the churches to which Ignatius wrote, but also in all or most of those with which he was acquainted. But his testimony does not stop here. Writing to the Ephesians, he says : " Therefore I was forward to exhort you to run in harmony with the mind of God ; for Jesus Christ also, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, as the bishops settled in the farthest parts are in the mind of Jesus Christ."³ These words clearly imply that bishops were to be found through all parts of Christendom. There might still be churches—though unworthy of the name—which had no bishop ; but, in so far as Ignatius knew, the monarchical episcopate was the ordinary system of ecclesiastical government. In Antioch, therefore, from which he came ; in Asia Minor, through which he passed ; and in Rome,

¹ Literally " firm " (βέβαια). Cfr. Heb. ix. 17. ii. 2. Rom. iv. 6.

² To Philad. and Smyrn.

³ Eph. iii.

whose church he praises so highly, the faithful were ruled by monarchical bishops.

Ignatius does not regard the episcopate as a novelty ; though his repeated insistence on submission to the bishop has led some scholars to suspect that the episcopate was not yet firmly established. He insists on two principles, the fact of the Incarnation, and the necessity of ecclesiastical government. His insistence is quite intelligible in both cases, in view of the heretical tendencies he sought to combat. The cause which he *consciously* champions is not a monarchical, as against a collective, system of government ; but rather ecclesiastical government and discipline, as against anarchy, heresy and schism. He lays down the principle of submission to the bishop, because the monarchical episcopate is the only form of ecclesiastical government with which he is acquainted : he never even considers the possibility of any other system of organization. The testimony which he thus gives incidentally is really more valuable, than if he had taken as his chief thesis the supremacy of the bishop.

To listen to the bishop is to conform to the law of Christ and the ordinances of the apostles : " Everyone, whom the master of the house sends to govern his own household, we ought to receive as him who sent him ; clearly therefore we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself."¹ Again : " This ye will do, if ye are inseparable from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop, and from the ordinances of the apostles."² It is difficult to see what Ignatius can mean by the ordinances of the apostles, if it is not a reference to the establishment (by apostles) of the monarchical episcopate. The simile of the household, in turn, seems to imply that the apostles were merely the executors of the divine will, in setting up the episcopate. It is for this reason that he says : " Be subject to the bishop as to the commandment of God." Even though Ignatius here means, as Lightfoot maintains, " be subject to the bishop commanding as the voice of God," rather than " be subject to the bishop as a divine institution " ; nevertheless he seems to regard the episcopate as of divine appoint-

¹ Eph. vi.

² Trall. vii.

ment. Otherwise how could the monarchical rule ascribed to him claim to be the mind of God, and the voice of God commanding? Ignatius uses the same expression "commandment" in connection with the presbyters and deacons; but we need have no difficulty in supposing that he regarded the threefold hierarchy as of divine institution: "Without these (three orders) no church has a title to the name." If these were his beliefs, the monarchical government of the church of Antioch must have come down from the apostles.

To appreciate at its true value the testimony of Ignatius, it is necessary to have some idea of the time and circumstances in which he wrote. The following is a summary of the careful and exhaustive investigation made by Dr. Lightfoot:—"Of the origin, birth and education of Ignatius we are told absolutely nothing. . . . It may be conjectured, however, with probability from expressions in his letters that he was not born of Christian parentage; that he was brought up a pagan, and converted in mature life to Christianity Thus he, like St. Paul, speaks of himself¹ as an *ἐκτρώμα*, a child untimely born to Christ. There had been something violent, dangerous and unusual in his spiritual nativity. Coupled with this expression is another, which he uses elsewhere.² He speaks of himself as the last (*ἔσχατος*) of the Antiochene Christians, as unworthy therefore to have a place among them. It cannot indeed be safely inferred that this expression signifies in itself 'latest in time'; but the sense of inferiority which it implies is best explained by supposing that his conversion was comparatively late in date. Indeed not a few expressions in his epistles, otherwise hardly explicable, become full of life and meaning, when read in the light of this hypothesis. . . . All these attempts to name his teacher are excrescences on the earliest tradition, which is content to speak of him as an 'apostolic' man. . . . Of his accession to the episcopate we know nothing at all. If we place his martyrdom about A.D. 110, and suppose (as there is good reason for supposing) that he was an old or elderly man at the time, he may have been born about A.D. 40."

¹ Rom. ix.

² Eph. xxi. Trall. xiii. Smyrn. xi.

Dr. Lightfoot is not over-indulgent to the traditional accounts of Ignatius ; nevertheless, even on the basis of the scheme just quoted, the testimony of the Ignatian letters takes us back well into the first century, and shows that at that period the monarchical episcopate was firmly established at Antioch and in Asia Minor. Tradition, moreover, represents Ignatius as an " apostolic " man ; so that he was most probably a disciple of some of the apostles.¹ The only apostles, whose names are connected with those regions during the last thirty years of the first century, are John, Philip and Andrew. It is from these, most likely, that Ignatius received his apostolic teaching. The repeated references in his letters to the truth of the Incarnation would lead one to suspect that he had listened to St. John. If this conjecture is well founded, the Ignatian letters afford good reasons for connecting the episcopate with the name of St. John. It is well to note that these are not the only documents that point in the same direction.

From Troas Ignatius crossed over to the coast of Europe, and thence passed to Philippi. He was welcomed by the Philippian Christians, and escorted by them on his way. We have unfortunately no epistle to the Philippians from the pen of Ignatius himself ; but, his friend Polycarp has partially made up for this deficiency. At the request of Ignatius, the Philippians had written a letter to Antioch ; and this letter was to be sent by Polycarp. The Philippians took advantage of the occasion to write a note to Polycarp himself. The latter's reply, which is still extant, is very interesting. It opens with the salutation : " Polycarp and the presbyters (elders) that are with him to the church of God which sojourns at Philippi." The writer makes no reference to the system of government at Philippi, though he makes it clear that he himself is the bishop of Smyrna. From the contents of the letter, however, we can draw an inference. The

¹ If he was an apostolic man, and nevertheless remembered no older form of ecclesiastical government—it, in fact, he regarded the monarchical episcopate as an ordinance of the apostles—then this form of organisation goes back to the apostle or apostles, with whom Ignatius was acquainted.

Philippians had evidently asked advice on certain questions : " These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I laid this charge upon myself, but because you invited me." The exhortations in question might be summed up as follows :—a general exhortation to all the faithful ; and particular exhortations concerning widows, deacons, young men, virgins and presbyters.

The absence of reference to the bishop in such a complete enumeration is surprising, especially in view of the attention devoted to presbyters and deacons. The presbyters must be " compassionate, merciful towards all men, turning back the sheep that are gone astray, visiting all the infirm ; not neglecting a widow, orphan or poor man ; but providing always for that which is honourable in the sight of God and men ; abstaining from all anger, respect of persons, unrighteous judgment ; being far from all love of money ; not quick to believe anything against any man ; not hasty in judgment, knowing that we are all debtors of sin." The same qualities, which St. Paul had required in candidates for the office of overseer, are here mentioned in different words. The repeated references to compassion, mercy, anger, hasty and unrighteous judgment, show that the presbyters played a much more important part in the maintenance of discipline at Philippi, than in the churches of Asia Minor. In the epistles of Ignatius this duty, like every other ecclesiastical function, devolved primarily on the bishop : " Let *nothing* be done without thy consent ; and do thou nothing without the consent of God."¹ Here it seems to devolve on the presbyters. The reference to neglect of the widow, the orphan and the poor man similarly shows that the administration of the church funds was chiefly in the hands of the presbyters.

Our surprise becomes suspicion, when we read : " Wherefore, it is right to abstain from all these things submitting yourselves to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ." The term of the comparison, " as to God and Christ," is evidently taken from the Ignatian epistles with which Polycarp was just now familiar. Notice, however,

¹ To Polycarp. iv.

the contrast in the exhortations. In the Ignatian epistles, the bishop holds the place of God, the presbyters that of Christ, or of the council of God. If the bishop is sometimes said to represent Christ, then the presbyters represent the college of apostles. In the epistle of Polycarp, on the other hand, the bishop drops out of the enumeration entirely, the presbyters hold the place of God, and the deacons that of Christ. When we consider the attention devoted to the bishop in almost every page of the Ignatian epistles, the supreme importance attached to his office, and the repeated exhortations to submit to the bishop as to God and Christ; when we remember that Polycarp had just read these epistles, and borrowed from them the term of comparison "God and Christ"; when we find Polycarp writing in the first person as the chief ruler of the church of Smyrna—when we take account of all this, it is difficult to understand how he could have written the words quoted above, if there was a monarchical bishop at Philippi. The absence of all reference to the bishop in the passage where we should expect the enumeration of his virtues, and again among those to whom the faithful owe obedience; the nature of the qualifications required in presbyters; and the exhortation, "be subject to the presbyters and deacons as to God and Christ"—these facts can scarcely be explained except on the hypothesis of a plural episcopate.

This interpretation of Polycarp's letter is confirmed by the reference to Valens. The Philippians appear to have been at a loss to know how to treat the fallen presbyter. Polycarp counsels moderation: "Therefore, brethren, I am exceedingly grieved for him and his wife; may the Lord grant them true repentance. Be ye therefore yourselves also sober herein, and hold not such as enemies; but restore them as frail and erring members, that ye may save the whole body of you." These are not like words intended for a monarchical superior. Indeed, we can scarcely imagine the bishop of Philippi appealing at all, on such a question, to the bishop of Smyrna; but even if he had asked Polycarp's advice, the latter would never have shaped his reply as he has done.

It was clearly the bishop's duty to look after Valens; if he chose to consult Polycarp, it was incumbent on the latter to keep the bishop primarily in view in his reply. Now, Polycarp, as bishop of Smyrna, writes in the first person; but, so far from addressing the bishop of Philippi, he puts his reply in such a shape, that it cannot have been intended for a monarchical superior. The letter is addressed to the whole church; and it mentions every class in the community except one. The man, who, if the same conditions prevailed at Philippi as at Smyrna, ought to be mentioned before all others—that one man, the centre of ecclesiastical organisation, is completely ignored.

It has been suggested that Polycarp implies the existence of a bishop at Philippi, by the mere fact that he says nothing about him. Polycarp had learned from Ignatius that the threefold hierarchy was necessary for even the name of a church. If the Philippians had no bishop, he would have noticed, and disapproved of the fact, and suggested the immediate appointment of one. We might well retort: Polycarp had learned from Ignatius the necessity of preaching submission to the bishop; "Be subject to the bishop" is the chief theme of the Ignatian letters. When Polycarp was asked, therefore, for advice and exhortation, it was clearly his first duty to say: "Be subject to the bishop," if a bishop really existed. It is unnecessary, however, to press this point.

We have only to read the words of Polycarp himself, to see why he could not have felt called on to suggest a new form of government to the Philippians: "But I have not found any such thing among you, neither have I heard thereof; among whom the blessed Paul laboured; who were his letters in the beginning. For he boasts of you, in all those churches, which alone at that time knew the Lord; *for we knew Him not yet.* . . . For I am persuaded that you are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted." The church of Philippi is older than that of Smyrna; it has received its traditions from St. Paul himself, both by word and by letter; its praises have been sounded through all the churches by the great apostle;

its members are still better trained in the Sacred Scriptures than Polycarp himself. Was this great apostolic church to be asked to change the organisation handed down by St. Paul? Was it to be asked to do so, by a church that acknowledged its own inferiority? Polycarp claimed no authority to interfere in the affairs of Philippi, or reform its organisation: "These things I write . . . not because I laid the charge on myself, but because you invited me. For *neither am I, nor is anyone like unto me*, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when he came among you, taught face to face the men of that day carefully and surely the word which concerned truth." Ignatius makes a similar protestation to the Romans. Whatever Polycarp may have heard from Ignatius ¹ on the subject of the threefold hierarchy he knew too much about Philippi, to undertake the reformation of its hierarchical organization. Ignatius and Polycarp did not claim to be apostles; both would have deemed it impertinence on their part, to endeavour to change the traditions handed down by St. Paul, in a great church like Philippi.

We can infer, therefore, from the epistle of Polycarp that the church of Philippi was still ruled by a college of presbyters. We have already seen that the same system of government prevailed at Corinth, when Clement wrote his epistle. As Corinth and Philippi were two of the most important churches of the Greek peninsula, we may conclude that the monarchical episcopate had not yet been introduced into the provinces of Achaia and Macedonia. The *Didache*, written probably about A.D. 80-110, shows that, in some of the Eastern provinces, the plural episcopate was still the ordinary form of ecclesiastical government. Ignatius' reference to the "bishops established in the farthest parts" cannot be pressed very far; it seems to contain a very natural hyperbole. When we remember that St. Paul said the praise of the Thessalonians ² was spread abroad in every place,

¹ It is possible that Polycarp, being himself *first* bishop of Smyrna, did not hold so strong views as Ignatius.

² 1 Thess. i. 8.

though they were only a few months converted, we need not be surprised at the language of the much more enthusiastic writer Ignatius. He was drawing an inference, perhaps, from the organization of the communities, with which he was acquainted, to that of the Church in general.

The reader will have noticed that Eusebius traces to apostolic times only the episcopal lines of the four great sees, which were afterwards regarded as patriarchates. He says nothing of the first bishops of the smaller communities, which were scattered through the Roman provinces governed from these cities. It is rather surprising that a writer, whose chief purpose is "to record the successions of the holy apostles," should confine his labours within limits so narrow. It is particularly surprising, in view of the fact that, from the end of the second century, we meet the names of provincial bishops on almost every page of his *History*. What is the explanation of this phenomenon? We may leave out of consideration, for the present, the Western Church: Eusebius appears to have depended almost entirely for his history of this period on the writings and traditions handed down in the East. We might have expected, however, more information about the bishops of Egypt¹ and Syria, the provinces of which Alexandria and Antioch were the respective capitals. The *Didache* explains his silence in regard to one—though it is uncertain which²—of these provinces. The following considerations will help to explain his reticence in regard to the other.

"In the tenth year of the reign of Severus, when Laetus governed Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, and when Demetrius had obtained the episcopate of the churches there (τῶν αὐτόθι παροικιῶν τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν—note the plural) as successor of Julianus, the persecution broke out."³ By these words, Eusebius seems to imply that as late as A.D. 202,

¹ It is only when he comes to the third century that Eusebius mentions any Egyptian bishop outside Alexandria.

² Critics are not agreed as to the place of origin of the *Didache*. Some think it is Egypt, others Syria, others Palestine.

³ Euseb. vi. 2. Cfr. iii. 4. τῆς παροικίας . . . ἐπισκοπὴν for the single church of Ephesus.

there was only one bishop for "Alexandria and the rest of Egypt." It does not follow that all Egypt formed a single diocese, in the modern sense of the word. Eusebius never speaks of the bishop of Egypt, but always of the bishop of Alexandria : on the other hand, he speaks of the churches of Egypt in the plural, where "church" is equivalent to "diocese." Demetrius was bishop of Alexandria ; but he exercised some kind of metropolitan jurisdiction over all Egypt. It is for this reason that Eusebius makes the distinction, "Alexandria and the rest of Egypt."

In the reign of Dionysius, the second in succession from Demetrius, we hear for the first time of provincial Egyptian bishops. Eusebius mentions in particular those of Nilopolis and Hermopolis. There was at the same time, however, a large district in Egypt, which was still served by elders and teachers : "When I was at Arsinoe, where, as you know, this doctrine was long afloat, so that schisms and apostasies of whole churches followed, after I had called the elders and teachers of the brethren in the villages . . . I exhorted them to examine the doctrine publicly. When they had produced this book. . . I sat with them for three days from morning till evening, endeavouring to refute what it contained. Then also I was greatly pleased to observe the constancy, sincerity, docility and intelligence of the brethren, as we proceeded to advance in order, and the moderation of our questions and doubts and mutual concessions. The other brethren present also rejoiced at this conference, and at the conciliatory spirit and unanimity exhibited by all."¹ The presbyters of Alexandria could never have shown such independence in a disputation with their own bishop ; nor could Dionysius speak so kindly of them, if they challenged his magisterial authority. Arsinoe, then as afterwards, formed a separate diocese (or perhaps several) ; but the bishop of Alexandria claimed some kind of metropolitan jurisdiction over the presbyters who ruled it. About seventy years later, we shall find the council of Nice acknowledging these claims. The council is evidently confirming a tradition—a tradition which

¹ Dionysius apud Euseb. vii. 24.

has come down from the time when the bishop of Alexandria succeeded to the episcopate of " Alexandria and the rest of Egypt." We can, therefore, see the Egyptian churches passing through a transition period, during which some have monarchical bishops and others have not.

It is also worth noting that, during the paschal controversy, episcopal synods were held at the request of Pope Victor in almost every province of Christendom.¹ Though Alexandria was now the most important church in the East, and though it was particularly interested in the question,² we find no reference to an Egyptian synod. Half a century later, we find Dionysius writing several letters on the subject; those are the only contributions made by Alexandria to the discussion. These facts, so far as we can see, can only be explained on the hypothesis, that during the reign of Victor (A.D. 189-199) there were no bishops in Egypt to meet in Council. Demetrius was then bishop of Alexandria, but he had succeeded to the episcopate of Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. In the neighbouring province of Pentapolis, a similar condition of things existed; for Basilides, a contemporary of Dionysius, was bishop *τῶν κατὰ τὴν Πεντάπολιν παροικιῶν*.³

These quotations throw considerable light on a curious fact recorded by St. Jerome: " At Alexandria, from the time of Mark down to Heracleas and Dionysius, the presbyters nominated as bishop one elected from themselves and placed on a higher level, as an army elects a commander, or the deacons their archdeacon." ⁴ St. Jerome does not tell us what change took place about the time of Heracleas and Dionysius; but we can draw an inference from what has been already said. While there was only a single bishop in Egypt, the bishop of Alexandria, the selection of the candidate for office naturally fell to the presbyters of the church of Alexandria; when bishops were appointed in other centres, they soon claimed a voice in the election of their metropolitan superior. Now, it is precisely at this time—

¹ Euseb. v. 23. 24.

² Alexandria drew up the calendar for the Eastern churches.

³ Euseb. vii. 26.

⁴ Letter to Evangelus.

the reigns of Heracleas and Dionysius—that we first begin to meet with provincial bishops in Egypt. Is it not very probable that Jerome is referring to the time, when the bishops gained control of the election of the patriarch?

We have the word of Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century, that “from the time of Hananias (Anianus?) to the time of Demetrius, the eleventh patriarch of Alexandria, there was no bishop in the territory of Egypt; nor had the patriarchs who were before him appointed a bishop. When Demetrius was made patriarch, he appointed three bishops, and he was the first patriarch who appointed bishops. When he died, Heracleas was appointed in his place; and he appointed twenty bishops.” The *Annals* of Eutychius, as an independent historical document, is practically valueless; but its confirmation of the conclusions we have drawn from Eusebius and Jerome is remarkable.

The Ignatian epistles afford some reason for thinking that a similar state of things existed in Syria at an earlier period. Although Ignatius, when he writes to others, always addresses his remarks to the church of a city—the church in Ephesus of Asia, the church in Magnesia on the Menander, the church in Tralles of Asia—he speaks of his own church as the church of Syria: “Pray for the church, which is in Syria, whence I am led a prisoner to Rome.¹ . . . Remember also the church which is in Syria, whereof I am not worthy to be called a member.”² He speaks occasionally of “the church which is in Antioch of Syria”; but more frequently of “the church which is in Syria,” simply.

This expression is particularly significant, when he speaks of himself as a bishop: “God has vouchsafed that the bishop of Syria (τόν ἐπίσκοπον Συρίας) should be found in the West, having summoned him from the East.”³ And again: “Remember in your prayers the church which is in Syria, which has God for its shepherd in my stead.”⁴ Dr. Lightfoot, while maintaining the genuineness of the words τόν ἐπίσκοπον

¹ Eph. xxi.

³ Rom. ii.

² Magn. xiv. Trall. xiii.

⁴ Rom. ix.

Συρίας, contends, nevertheless, that they cannot mean "the bishop of Syria." A diocese of Syria, he says, would have been an anachronism in the time of Ignatius. We may admit that a *diocese of Syria* is out of the question; each city community still formed an independent diocese. But it does not follow that the title "bishop of Syria" would have been an anachronism. The word "bishop" was not yet so clearly defined, that it could not be used of a metropolitan superior. Tertullian uses the expression, "episcopus episcoporum," to signify the primatial jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome. If Ignatius resided at Antioch, and ruled the church there, as Polycarp ruled that of Smyrna; and if in addition, he exercised a general supervision over the whole of Syria, what objection can be taken to the expression under discussion? If Demetrius succeeded to the episcopate of Alexandria *and the rest of Egypt*, surely Ignatius could succeed to the episcopate of Antioch *and the rest of Syria*.

It was now three-quarters of a century since the Gospel had been first preached in Antioch; apostles, prophets and missionaries had made it the centre of their propagandist activity; the faith must have spread in all directions from the capital of the province. Antioch cannot have been the only church in the province of Syria in the time of Ignatius. Eusebius, though he traces the episcopal line of Antioch back to St Peter, mentions no other Syrian bishop till the time of the paschal controversy. In view of these facts, the expression, "bishop of Syria," in the mouth of Ignatius is quite intelligible.

Of Palestine we know nothing, except what we can gather from the silence of Eusebius. Theophilus, who ruled the church of Caesarea towards the close of the second century, is the first Palestinian bishop mentioned, outside the episcopal list of Jerusalem. As Eusebius was himself bishop of Caesarea, and as Caesarea was then the metropolitan see of Palestine, we should expect him to trace its succession of bishops back to apostolic times, if tradition allowed him to do so. We shall probably be near the truth in concluding, from the analogy of Egypt and Syria, that Jerusalem in the beginning,

and Caesarea later on, was the episcopal centre for all Palestine.

The churches of Gaul appear to have been similarly grouped, during the second century, under the bishop of Lyons. Not only is there no mention of any other Gallican see, but Eusebius expressly states that the churches of Gaul were under the episcopal guidance of Irenaeus, at the time of the paschal controversy. "There is extant," Eusebius says, "an epistle of the *bishops* of *Pontus*, over whom Palmas, as the oldest, *presided*; also an epistle of the *churches* of Gaul, over which Irenaeus was bishop."¹ Notice that whereas the letter from Pontus, as we might expect from the Ignatian epistles, is sent out by an assembly of *bishops*, the letter from Gaul comes from the *churches* through a single bishop.

The results of our investigations on the episcopate may be summed up as follows. As late as the middle of the second century, many of the Roman provinces possessed only a single monarchical bishop. About the time of Ignatius, the monarchical episcopate was practically confined to the Pauline churches of Asia Minor, and the four great patriarchal sees. During the lifetime of St. Paul, even the churches of Asia Minor were governed by a corporate jurisdiction. From this brief statement of the case, it will be seen that the extension of the monarchical episcopate to the ordinary small communities began in Asia Minor, during the latter half of the first century, and gradually spread to all the provinces of the Empire. We have, therefore, to fill up the gap between two extremes; we have to trace the development from St. Paul to Ignatius, from a time when the *diocesan* monarchical episcopate was comparatively unknown, till it became, for Asia Minor at least, the only recognised form of ecclesiastical government.

Let us see what St. Jerome, a Doctor of the Church, thought of this development, in the fourth century. In his commentary

¹ Τῶν κατὰ Πόντον ἐπισκόπων ὧν Παλμας προὔτετακτο, καὶ τῶν κατὰ Γαλλίαν παροικιῶν ἃς Εἰρηναῖος ἐπεσκόπει. Euseb. v. 23.

on the epistle to Titus,¹ he maintains that bishops (overseers) and presbyters (elders) were originally the same; and he quotes several passages of the New Testament in support of his theory: "Philippi being one city could not have several bishops, as bishops are now known (*i.e.* monarchical bishops). Those superiors were presbyters; yet the apostle speaks of them in the same terms as of bishops. Bishops and presbyters were formerly the same, therefore, but gradually the whole charge was given to one man, as a remedy against dissensions. As presbyters understand, therefore, that they are subject by reason of the custom of the Church, so let bishops understand that they are superior by custom, rather than by any disposition of the Lord." He has just told us in the preceding paragraph, that each church was originally governed by the common counsel of the presbyteral college: '*communio presbyterorum consilio ecclesiae gubernabantur.*' In a letter to Evangelus, he again maintains that bishops and presbyters were originally the same: "As a remedy for schism, however, one was elected and placed over the others, lest each, by drawing after him (a portion of the community), should divide the church of Christ. At Alexandria, from the time of Mark down to Heracleas and Dionysius, the presbyters nominated as bishop one elected from themselves and placed on a higher level, as an army elects its general, or the deacons their archdeacon. For, with the exception of ordination, what does a bishop do that a presbyter does not?" St. Jerome's teaching may be summed up in the following propositions:—(1) In the matter of orders, presbyters are inferior to bishops—at least in his own day—in as much as they have not the power of ordaining. (2) In jurisdiction, bishops and presbyters are equal, so far as the divine law is concerned. The episcopal authority succeeded the apostolic; but that it should be exercised by an individual, rather than by a corporate body, is due to a regulation of ecclesiastical law. (3) Formerly it was actually exercised, in most cases, by a corporate body; but, owing to dissensions and schisms,

¹ In Tit. i.

the Church found it necessary to transfer the supreme local authority to an individual.

These remarks of St. Jerome's have been the subject of much controversy. He has been quoted by Presbyterian writers, to refute the claims of Episcopalians; he has been criticised by the latter for his apparent inconsistency. Neither contention seems to be well founded. St. Jerome acknowledged that, in his own day, bishops were superior to priests, both in orders and jurisdiction; and he admitted that this state of things had been brought about by competent and legitimate ecclesiastical authority. His theory of the original identity of the two orders is based almost entirely on his interpretation of the New Testament; the Alexandrian custom is the only tradition which he quotes. His arguments from Scripture are all brought forward, to prove one point, that *jure divino* bishops and priests hold the same *jurisdiction*. Formerly, he tells us, the churches were *ruled* by corporate bodies; Philippi could not have several bishops, as bishops are now known; priests are *subject* by the custom of the Church. He supposes—what is perfectly true—that the word *ἐπίσκοπος* primarily implies jurisdiction; hence, the presbyter elected at Alexandria became bishop at once, when he was nominated by his colleges. The mention of orders was, moreover, unnecessary for his purpose. He was maintaining the superior authority of the presbyters, against the encroachments of the deacons. Nobody then denied that in the matter of orders presbyters were superior to deacons; the ordination of deacons to priesthood was sufficient evidence on this point. There was a tendency, however, to magnify the authority of the deacons, especially of the archdeacon, at the expense of the presbyters. It was with a view to combating this “arrogance” on the part of the deacons, that Jerome proposed to examine the claims of all parties. Deacons were always subject to the bishops; presbyters, on the other hand, were originally their equals, and are now subject only by ecclesiastical law. To oppose the authority of the deacon to that of the presbyter is to oppose it to that of the bishop himself; it is a violation of the divine constitution of the Church, handed down by the

apostles. Such is Jerome's argument. He believed, quite as firmly as any of his contemporaries, that all jurisdiction had been handed down by the apostles, and that it had been entrusted to a class of consecrated ministers. He differed from some of his contemporaries in this, that he held that the "dispositions of the Lord," as represented by the constitution of the Church handed down by the apostles, conferred all spiritual jurisdiction on bishops and presbyters equally. So far was he from supposing that all authority was democratic, that he would not admit that even deacons could ever legitimately exercise the jurisdiction of presbyters. The deacons did not possess the priesthood, which was the basis of jurisdiction.¹ Bishops and presbyters possessed that priesthood, and were equally capable, therefore, of governing the faithful; but the Church, for its own good reasons, had made certain limitations within the priestly order itself.

St. Jerome does not appear to have thought out the question of orders so thoroughly, as he did that of jurisdiction; he does not explain how the power of ordination came to be reserved to the bishop. In the beginning, he tells us, presbyters were the equals of bishops, not only in jurisdiction, but also in orders. This proposition, however, means nothing more than that the words "elder" (presbyter) and "overseer" (bishop) are synonymous in the New Testament. He proves his point from the pastoral epistles: "Titus and Timothy are instructed about the *ordination* (de ordinatione) of bishops and deacons; no mention is made of the presbyters, because the presbyter is included in the bishop."² Bishops and presbyters were formerly ordained, therefore, by the same consecration. It is for this reason that the bishop of Alexandria needed no episcopal consecration from the time of Mark down to Heracleas. He was always elected from the presbyters and had, therefore, episcopal orders already. His election was like that of our archdeacon; it implied no

¹ vide appendix D.

² *Epistle to Evangelus*. The ordination spoken of by Jerome is the imposition of hands, as we pointed out in Chap. IV.

new consecration, but merely a transference of authority : " Listen to the testimony in which it is manifestly proved that bishops and presbyters were the same. . . . And to Timothy : neglect not the grace which is in you, which was given you through the imposition of the hands of the presbyteral college."¹ The first presbyters everywhere possessed, according to Jerome, the power of ordaining by imposition of hands.

Before Jerome's own day, however, an important change had taken place. The presbyters no longer possessed the full power of orders : " For with the exception of ordination, what does a bishop do that a presbyter does not ? " ² and again : " Let bishops, who have the power of constituting presbyters through the several churches, take note." He does not explain how the power of ordaining came to be reserved to bishops ; he probably never set himself the question formally. We may safely presume, however, that this reservation was part of the general limitation put on the presbyters, when they were placed under the authority of a monarchical bishop. The churches, according to Jerome, were originally ruled by a body of bishops or presbyters : " When each one began to regard those, whom he baptized, as his own, and not Christ's, *it was decreed throughout the world* that one of the presbyters should be placed over the rest, and that the seeds of schism should be thereby removed." As the power of conferring ordination was a much more powerful instrument of schism, than that of conferring baptism, and as it was much less frequently required, we may conclude that, in Jerome's theory, the power of ordaining was conferred only on bishops, after this decree.

If Jerome's account of Alexandria is true, the presbyters there must have been an exception to the general rule. Having a bishop from the beginning, they were not affected by the subsequent decree ; the system established by Mark continued, therefore, till the time of Heracleas, when the election of the bishop seems to have passed out of the hands of the presbyters.³

¹ *ibid.*

² Comm. in Tit. i.

³ It passed into the hands of the provincial bishops, who, as we have seen above, were just then becoming numerous.

The gradation of offices existing elsewhere was then introduced into Alexandria ; the power of ordaining was no longer given to the presbyters ; and Alexandria soon fell into line with the rest of the Church.

From this brief review it will be seen, that St. Jerome is not quite so inconsistent, as some writers would have us believe. His theory is simple. The words "presbyter" and "bishop" are synonymous in the New Testament ; the first presbyters, therefore, were bishops. Each church was ruled by a college of these presbyter-bishops in the beginning ; but the monarchical was afterwards substituted for the collegiate episcopate, under stress of circumstances. The change was made by a law of the universal Church, taking the shape, perhaps, of a binding custom. In his own day, bishops were superior to presbyters, not only in jurisdiction, but also in orders—the limitation with regard to orders having been introduced, by the decree which abolished the collegiate episcopate. This testimony, coming as it does from the greatest Scriptural scholar of the early Church, is a powerful confirmation of the position ascribed above to the presbyter-bishops. St. Jerome does not tell us when, where, or by whom, this universal decree was first introduced : these are the questions which remain to be cleared up.

In the time of Ignatius, the monarchical episcopate was firmly established in Asia Minor ; but how long this had been the case it is not easy to determine. One thing, however, appears to be certain : the monarchical episcopate was not then considered a novelty. It is the only form of ecclesiastical government known to Ignatius, who seems to regard it as part of the divine constitution of the Church.

If we turn to the *Apocalypse*, we can trace our subject farther. In this document, St. John gives instructions to the seven angels of seven churches. Notwithstanding all that has been written to the contrary, the old interpretation, which explains the angels as the bishops of these churches, still seems to be the most satisfactory. The angels in question cannot be the guardian angels of the churches ; for, while the apostle praises them for some things, he blames them

for others, and threatens them if they fail in their duty. Many present-day commentators take the angels as mere symbols of the communities in question, or of the temper or spirit of the communities. The words of St. John himself seem to exclude this interpretation; for he distinguishes clearly between the angel and the church: he makes each a concrete reality, the church being symbolised by a candlestick, and the angel by a star: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are seven churches." The angel, therefore, cannot be a mere symbol of the church; he is an independent person, distinct from the church, and having a distinct symbol like the church itself.

The instructions of the apostle also imply independence of personality. To the angel of Ephesus he writes: "Or else I will come to *thee*, and I will move *thy candlestick* out of its place, unless thou repent." Here the angel and his church are clearly distinguished, the exhortation being directed chiefly to the angel. In the message to Thyatira, we find instructions both for the angel and for the community: "To the angel of the church of Thyatira write. . . . I know thy works . . . but I have this against *thee*, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and seduces *my servants* . . . and I will kill her children with death. . . . But to you, the rest that are at Thyatira, I say: as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things on Satan, I will not cast on you any other burden." To the angel of Smyrna he writes: "Be thou faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life . . . he that overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." The exhortation to continue faithful to death, even to martyrdom, cannot be directed to the community, or to the spirit of the community, which never dies. It is only when we interpret the angels as the bishops of these churches that we can explain satisfactorily the messages that are sent them.

The nature of the metaphors and of the symbols used confirms this interpretation. The star placed on the candle-

stick is evidently a very natural figure of the bishop, who gives light by his teaching, first to the church, and through it to the pagan world. The word *ἄγγελος*, which has practically the same meaning as *ἀπόστολος*—(God's) envoy—is, moreover, a very suitable title for the chief superior of the community, the representative of God in the local church. St. John's language, when taken by itself, is somewhat vague ; but the references to the angels harmonise so well with the Ignatian epistles, written a few years later, that we can have little doubt that the apostle speaks of monarchical bishops. We may safely conclude, therefore, that about the last year of the first century the monarchical episcopate was a widespread institution in Asia Minor.

An early and well-supported tradition connects the foundation of these sees with the name of St. John himself. Irenaeus, who was a native of these parts, was a disciple of Polycarp ; Polycarp was a disciple of St. John. The testimony of Irenaeus, therefore, with regard to the activity of St. John, is of the highest historical value. Now, this witness testifies ¹ that his master Polycarp was appointed by "apostles" to the see of Smyrna. It is not clear whether he uses the plural "apostles" by a figure of speech, or really means that two or more apostles co-operated in making the appointment. The former alternative seems to be the more probable, in view of the testimony of Tertullian ; but the latter, if accepted, need create no difficulty. We know on reliable authority that the apostle Philip lived to a ripe old age, and spent the last years of his life at Ephesus and Hierapolis ; and there is reason to believe that Andrew visited the same regions. As Polycarp was the first bishop of Smyrna, the testimony of Irenaeus implies nothing less than that the monarchical episcopate was established at Smyrna by the last of the apostles.

Tertullian, likewise, testifies that St. John established several episcopal sees in Asia Minor ; and he mentions Smyrna in particular as an example : " Let them (the heretics) unroll their line of bishops, running down from the beginning by

¹ Adv. Haer. iii. 3.

succession, so that the first bishop shall have as author and predecessor one of the apostles, or one of the apostolic men who persevered with the apostles. In this manner the apostolic churches carry down their lists, as the church of Smyrna shows Polycarp placed there by St. John."¹ The same writer argues against Marcion: "What was handed down by the apostles is true. . . . We have also the disciple-churches (*alumnas ecclesias*) of John; for, though Marcion rejects the *Apocalypse*, the succession of bishops traced to its origin will show John as the founder."² The disciple-churches are evidently the seven churches mentioned in the *Apocalypse*. The testimony of Tertullian thus confirms the interpretation given above; and it adds that John was the founder of these sees.

We learn from the Muratorian Fragment that John wrote his gospel, at the request of his bishops and fellow-disciples *cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis*. The words might appear, at first sight, to be an error of the scribe for *discipulis et conepiscopis suis*; but there can be no doubt about the reading. The disciples in question are the surviving apostles and disciples of the Lord: "It was revealed to the apostle Andrew, that John should write all in his own name, with the approval of all the rest." The prefix *con*, therefore, goes with *discipulis*; and the bishops are John's bishops—*episcopis suis*. The only satisfactory explanation of these words is that which can be gathered from the words of Tertullian: "The succession of bishops traced to its origin will show John (its) founder." The bishops are John's, because they were appointed by him.

The testimony of Asia Minor, North Africa and Italy, is confirmed by that of Egypt. "Listen to a story," says Clement of Alexandria, "which is no fiction, but real history, handed down and carefully preserved, concerning the apostle John. For when John returned to Ephesus, after the death of the tyrant, he used to go to the neighbouring Gentile regions, in some places to set up bishops, in others to establish whole churches, in others to ordain some of those pointed out by

¹ Tert. De Prescr. 32.

² Adv. Marc. iv. 5.

the Spirit."¹ Here again, we find the name of John associated with the appointment of bishops in Asia Minor. Clement's testimony is particularly valuable. He was a master in Christian tradition. He had travelled far and wide; he had studied under at least six different teachers, in Greece, Italy and the East. One of these was a native of the Ionian coast, the scene of the events here narrated; and several of them were immediate disciples of Peter, James, *John* or Paul. "They came to us also by God's will," he says, "to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds."²

Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, was appointed first bishop of Smyrna; Papias was his fellow-student and fellow-disciple. Is it not very probable that as Polycarp was appointed by St. John to the newly-erected see of Smyrna, so Papias was appointed to that of Hierapolis? The example of Smyrna likewise gives us reason to suppose that the monarchical episcopate was established by the same authority in all the Asiatic churches, addressed by Ignatius. We have already referred to Tertullian's testimony, for the Asiatic churches mentioned in the *Apocalypse*. The aged apostle John seems to have regarded it as his special duty, to make provision for the stability of ecclesiastical government after his death. The last years of his life were spent in remodelling a system of organisation, which could work successfully, only while the apostles survived to visit the churches, and counteract the forces of disintegration. This is the testimony of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and the Muratorian Fragmentist; it represents the belief of the universal Church in the second half of the second century.

The movement, begun by St. John in Asia Minor, spread rapidly to all the chief churches of Christendom. Before the end of the second century, theologians could state the theory of tradition in the form:—The true doctrine is preserved, wherever the apostolic teaching has been handed down through an unbroken line of (monarchical) bishops. There were still churches in the outlying districts of Egypt and

¹ Euseb. iii. 23. Clem. *Quis dives sal.* 42.

² Strom. i. 1.

other provinces, which had yet no bishop ; but these were accounted of no importance ; they took no serious part in the great theological controversies ; they were merely the mission-fields of the day. The collegiate episcopate had so completely passed out of memory in all the older apostolic churches, that Irenaeus, with all his tradition and experience, was unaware that “ presbyter ” (elder) and “ bishop ” (overseer) had once been interchangeable terms. This is clear from his remarks on the discourse at Miletus, recorded in the *Acts*. “ Paul,” he says, “ taught with simplicity what he knew . . . for when the bishops *and* presbyters, who were from Ephesus *and the neighbouring cities* were called together.”¹ When these words were written, the monarchical episcopate must have long been the ordinary system of ecclesiastical government in the great apostolic churches.

There is no ground, therefore, for the theory so often put forward by non-Catholic scholars, that the episcopate was simply the outcome of the double crisis caused by the Gnostic and Montanist heresies in the second century. Episcopal jurisdiction had been exercised in every church from the beginning ; even the monarchical episcopate had been known in some of the great churches from the death of their apostolic founders. Where this was not the case, bishops had been appointed in many churches by St. John ; and the example set by him in Asia Minor was soon copied in other provinces. Before the end of the first century, the monarchical episcopate was established over all Asia Minor ; before the Montanist crisis, it had become the ordinary form of church government. If the episcopate was called into existence by the heresies, as some writers maintain, we should find it arising spontaneously in Asia Minor, about the middle of the second century. The actual fact, however, is quite different ; the episcopate was known much earlier ; it can be traced in many churches to the apostle John.

The reasons, which commended this form of organization to the aged apostle, can be gathered from a consideration of the conditions which had hitherto prevailed. If, as seems quite

¹ Adv. Haer. iii. 14.

probable, at least for the Pauline churches, the presbyters did not enjoy the full power (or right¹) of ordaining to ecclesiastical office, then the churches of Asia Minor had few men competent to perpetuate the ministry. Theodore of Mopsuestia tells us that not more than one such ordaining prelate existed in each province. The disciples consecrated by St. Paul still survived; but most of these had gone to labour in mission-fields hitherto untouched.² The majority of the churches must have depended, therefore, for the ordination of their clergy, on the occasional visits of the few remaining apostles and "distinguished men." The last of the apostles could not leave the ministry in so unsatisfactory a condition. Many of the churches were now old and strong in the faith; a whole generation had been educated in Christianity; the difficulties which beset young churches, and which made a hierarchy of neophytes suspicious to St. Paul, were fast disappearing; and the communities had now settled down to a Christian life. In these circumstances, St. John thought it advisable to provide each church with a complete hierarchy—a hierarchy, which would not only suffice for its present requirements, but which could also expand itself in the future to any extent required by the spread of the Gospel.

From the point of view of jurisdiction, the change was no less desirable. Schismatical and heretical tendencies were beginning to be felt;³ domestic factions were already appearing in the churches;⁴ presbyters were occasionally failing away.⁵ Our Lord had already said: "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." A centre of unity was required in the church—a centre which could not itself be divided. This is a point on which Ignatius constantly insists; the bishop's first duty is to maintain union among his flock. It is to the same consideration that St. Jerome attributes the establishment of the monarchical episcopate: "That one was afterwards elected and placed over the rest, was done as a remedy

¹ v. chap. vii. above.

² 2 Tim. iv. 10. Euseb. ii. 16. iii. 37.

³ *Apocalypse* and Ignatian epistles.

⁴ Clement's epis. Ignat. ad Phil.

⁵ Polycarp's epis.

for schism.”¹ Indeed, the same causes which call for a single head for the universal Church likewise require a single head for the local church. It is only a monarchical superior who can preserve peace, union and harmony, in troubled times, when the church is brought into contact with the subtle, and often fascinating, speculations of heretics. The powers of orders and jurisdiction being the natural complements of each other, St. John secured his two-fold object, by establishing in each community a monarchical superior, who held at once the highest grade of orders, and the supreme local jurisdiction.

The ease and rapidity, with which the change was effected, need not create surprise. It had the authority of an apostle to recommend it ; and schismatical and heretical tendencies rendered it necessary. Collegiate government was becoming more and more difficult, partly because of the restless spirit abroad, partly because the restraining influence of frequent apostolic visitations was fast disappearing. It could only be maintained, in districts where the metropolitan jurisdiction of the great patriarchs could be easily exercised. In young communities, as in youthful organisms, rapid development is a natural phenomenon. The change introduced by St. John in Asia Minor was soon taken up in other provinces ; and within a period, which to a modern historian might seem quite inadequate, the monarchical episcopate had established itself in all the great churches of Christendom. The authority of the apostle, no doubt, was the great incentive to the change ; but, the circumstances of the times, the youth and vigour of the communities, and the unsettled nature of their antecedent organization must have considerably accelerated the completion of the work.

The ecclesiastical unit, to which St. John attached a bishop, was not a diocese, in the modern sense of the word ; it was the Christian community of a town or city. Except in the case of large cities, therefore, the bishop's jurisdiction was confined within very narrow territorial limits. His diocese was often

¹ Ep. to Evangelus.

much more like a modern parish, than a modern diocese. The province of Asia (within its post-Diocletian limits), which was not much larger than an Irish county, sent thirty two bishops to the council of Ephesus,¹ and thirty-nine to the council of Chalcedon. The document known as *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles* shows us the monarchical episcopate pushed to extremes: "If a scarcity of men happens, and the number of men capable of voting is less than twelve, let them write to the neighbouring church, that three chosen men may come and test who is worthy."² As the presbyters and deacons will be ordained by the bishop, now about to be appointed,³ and as there is no mention of a restriction of the vote, we may presume that at least the head of each family has a voice in the election. The writer contemplates, therefore, the possibility of an episcopal flock of less than twelve families. It was against this unnecessary multiplication of bishops that Theodore of Mopsuestia protested in his own day. The Church has since returned somewhat towards the system of organization, which prevailed in Egypt and Syria about the beginning of the second century. We have no longer a bishop for every community; several towns, and even cities, now go to form a single diocese; and the amalgamated unit is ruled by a single bishop.

How are we to explain, in the light of these facts, the teaching of the council of Trent? Professor Sabatier writes: "Father Perrone also tries to do justice to history, by saying that the proposition, *episcopi sunt presbyteris superiores jure divino*, is not an article of faith. The Council of Trent, however, says: *Si quis dixerit in ecclesia Catholica non esse hierarchiam divina ordinatione institutam, quæ constat ex episcopis, presbyteris et ministris anathema sit*. Whom shall we believe?"⁴ Our answer is: believe both. The council

¹ Mansi *Concilia*. tom. iv. P. 1211. 1226. Hatch. op. cit. P. 79.

² Ch. xvi. Some critics maintain that it is the eligible men, and not the voters, that must be twelve; but, as it is the same men who come under both categories in this case, it does not matter which interpretation we follow.

³ ib. xvii.

⁴ *The Religions of Authority and Religion of the Spirit*. Appendix XXXVII.

defines that a hierarchy exists by divine appointment ; it also defines that this hierarchy *de facto* consists of (at least) ¹ three grades. It does not, however, use the words, " quae divina ordinatione constat," as Sabatier's remarks demand. In the next canon we read : " Si quis dixerit episcopos non esse presbyteris superiores, vel non habere potestatem confirmandi et ordinandi ; vel eam quam habent illis esse cum presbyteris communem . . . A.S." Here, again, it is well to note that the council does not specify by what law (divine or ecclesiastical) bishops are superior to priests. Anyone, who is acquainted with the language of councils, knows that canons of this kind are to be strictly interpreted ; we must not attribute to a council more than it has said ; definitions are not among those things that are *amplianda*.

There is no necessity, therefore, " to try to do justice to history," in our interpretation of the canons of Trent. ² The council has laid down nothing which is not supported by history. The existence of a divinely-appointed hierarchy is guaranteed by all the early documents. We have seen that the apostles ordained overseers and deacons in every church, in accordance with the power which they had received from Christ. Clement of Rome, writing about A.D. 97, formulated the theory of succession, in words as clear as any that have since appeared : " Christ was from God ; the apostles from Christ : the overseers from the apostles." History likewise testifies that there was a distinction of grades in the hierarchy, even from the beginning. There was a higher service proper to the overseers or elders, and a lower service exercised by the deacons. There was a further distinction among those who held the higher ministry ; for not all had the power to ordain others. It is on this superior power of orders that the council of Trent chiefly bases the definition *episcopi sunt presbyteris superiores*. ³ When the supreme local jurisdiction was vested

¹ Notice " ministris," not " diaconis." Sess. XXIII. can. 6.

² As a matter of fact, Perrone held that the monarchical episcopate is of divine institution, though he admitted that the proposition was never defined.

³ Ordination and confirmation, the only exclusively episcopal functions mentioned by the Council, are both performed in virtue of the power of orders.

in a single bishop, by competent authority, the bishop thereby became superior to the presbyters in jurisdiction also.

If Sabatier tells us that "bishop" and "presbyter" were not only interchangeable terms in the beginning, but also represented the highest grade of orders, the council of Trent does not compel us to differ from him. It is a purely historical question; and St. Jerome and many other Catholic writers after him have maintained the same view. When he adds, however, that the council of Trent contradicts all this, he is drawing a false and illogical conclusion. The council is not speaking, in the definition before us, of the presbyters who had the plenitude of orders—for these were really bishops—they are speaking of the presbyters of later times, who have not the plenitude of orders. Sabatier quotes with great gusto the words of St. Jerome, *idem est presbyter qui et episcopus*; he forgets that Jerome is using the historical present, and that he admitted that, in his own day, presbyters and bishops were *not* the same. In this connection, we may call attention to what Sabatier himself says two pages before: "Words change in meaning, as institutions are modified. With respect to none is this more true than to the word ἐπίσκοπος. We shall comprehend nothing in history, so long as we persist in reading the documents of the past through the spectacles put before our eyes by the ideas of the present." We thoroughly agree with the principle; we have used it in the explanation of the teaching of St. Jerome. But, does not our critic himself fall into the mistake, which he here condemns? The words *presbyter* and *episcopus* were *once interchangeable* terms, he tells us; therefore the council of Trent is *wrong* in drawing a distinction *now*.

Let us apply Sabatier's own principle, that words change their signification, and that this is particularly true of the word ἐπίσκοπος. We have already pointed out the synonymy of the words *presbyter* (elder) and *overseer* (bishop) in the New Testament. We have also shown that there is good reason to think that, in the beginning, neither of these words necessarily represented those who exercised episcopal orders—at least in the Pauline churches. It was probably only the

apostles, "evangelists," and "distinguished men," who actually ordained to ecclesiastical office in these churches.¹ The convenience and necessity of a definite technical vocabulary was bound to be felt at an early date; and it was felt. Before the death of Ignatius, ἐπίσκοπος had received a new signification; it supplanted the older expressions used by Clement and St. Paul. The correlative, πρεσβύτερος, likewise acquired a more definite meaning; it became the stereotyped title of the second grade of the hierarchy. When we find these two words employed by the council of Trent, are we to interpret them in the sense which they bore for a few years in the first century? Or are we to interpret them in the sense consecrated by the usage of fifteen hundred years? The answer is obvious.

Having now answered the pointless objection from the original synonymy of "presbyters" and "bishops," we may return to the question of the threefold hierarchy. Did the council of Trent define that the present threefold hierarchy exists as such by divine appointment? Sabatier thinks it did; for he opposes the Tridentine definition to the view put forward by Perrone. We have only to read the history of the council, however, to see that he is mistaken. The very proposition discussed by Perrone—*episcopi sunt presbyteris superiores jure divino*—was brought up at the council on two occasions. Some of the Spanish representatives did their best to secure its definition; but they failed to secure their point, even in the preliminary discussions.² When the canons already quoted were under discussion, those same representatives endeavoured to have it defined that bishops (*i.e.* monarchical bishops) were instituted by Christ; but this proposition was also rejected.³ Lainius, the superior-general of the Jesuits, who was himself present at the council, wrote a treatise to prove that bishops received their jurisdiction immediately from the pope. The same view has been held by many later writers: and it appears to exclude the

¹ v. Chapter VII. above.

² Cfr. Pallavicino. *History of the Council of Trent*. xviii. 12.

³ *ibid.* xxi. 11.

immediate divine institution of the monarchical episcopate. From these facts, it is clear that the council cannot have meant to define that the monarchical episcopate is of divine institution, and that consequently the bishops are superior *jure divino* to the presbyters. The canon, *Si quis dixerit non esse hierarchiam divina ordinatione institutam, quae constat ex episcopis, presbyteris et ministris*, means, as we have already pointed out, that a hierarchy exists *jure divino* in the Church, and that this hierarchy is at present composed of bishops, presbyters and ministers.

The practice of the Church points to the same conclusion. Ignatius seems to have thought that the hierarchy in its present threefold form was of divine institution; he tells the Trallians that no church is worthy of the name, which has not its bishop, presbyters and deacons. At the present time, however, most of the dioceses of the Latin Church have not a single deacon. The third order of the hierarchy is now found only in ecclesiastical seminaries, and here it is merely a stage on the way to priesthood. Theologians are agreed, moreover, that deaconship is unnecessary for the valid reception of the priesthood. I find nothing in the teaching of the Church to forbid us to suppose that she could discontinue the ordination of deacons entirely, and thereby limit the hierarchy to two orders. In so far as missionary work is concerned, the limitation is an accomplished fact, throughout the greater part of Catholic Christendom.

Again, let us take the monarchical, as opposed to the collegiate, episcopate. There can be question only of jurisdiction; for no one will deny that many or all of the priests of a diocese might be raised to episcopal orders. We have already traced the development of the episcopate in the first and second centuries; but, the development did not stop here. Dioceses have been arranged and re-arranged, till there is scarcely a trace of the sees of former days; jurisdictions have been everywhere amalgamated; the episcopate of whole nations has been temporarily suppressed. Even in our own days, there are many missionary countries where ordinary episcopal jurisdiction is still unknown. We have *vicars*

apostolic and *prefects apostolic* in China and Africa, who hold their authority as delegates of the pope. Will anyone say that these arrangements are not the work of ecclesiastical law? Could not the pope appoint two or more vicars to represent him in a single region in China or Uganda? If the monarchical episcopate is not necessary *jure divino* in these parts, it is difficult to see how it could have been necessary in similar circumstances in the early Church. If a well-organised diocese can have a chief bishop and one or more coadjutors, it is difficult to see why it could not have as many equal bishops—so far as the divine law is concerned.

Christ transmitted all spiritual powers, both of orders and jurisdiction, to a college of apostles, grouped under a single head. The apostles were bound to transmit this authority in turn, to a hierarchy grouped under a similar head. There is nothing, so far as I can find, in Scripture or tradition, to indicate that our Lord determined any further the details of ecclesiastical organisation. What, for instance, did Christ fix as the unit of localised jurisdiction? Was it the Christian population of a town, a district, a province, or a nation? The history of the Church proves that He left the matter to the apostles and their successors. Again, I can find nothing in the teaching of the Church to forbid us to suppose that the apostles could have admitted all ecclesiastical superiors to the full power of orders. As a fact, however, they admitted some to the plenitude, others to a greater or less participation. Whether a man is a bishop, a presbyter (priest) or a deacon, he holds a divine commission handed down by the apostles; he is a member of the hierarchy instituted *divina ordinatione*. This—and not the interpretation of Sabatier—I consider to be the meaning of the Tridentine canon, *quæ constat ex episcopis, presbyteris et ministris*.

If we suppose that the monarchical episcopate is necessary *jure divino*, it is still possible to hold with St. Jerome that St. Paul entrusted the ordinary local jurisdiction, at least for a time, to a college of bishops. St. John, as we have seen, afterwards reformed this system of government, and set up monarchical bishops. On the hypothesis before us, St. John

must have been acting as the inspired agent of God ; so that the Church can never abolish the system of government which he introduced. If, on the other hand, we suppose that St. John was only exercising his ordinary apostolic authority, in making this change, it will follow that the Church has power to return to the collegiate episcopate, if she ever finds it convenient to do so. As far as the principle of apostolic succession is concerned, it does not make the slightest difference which view we hold. It has been pointed out that all spiritual power comes down by transmission ; this is the essence of succession. Whether the power thus handed down was exercised in the beginning by an individual or by a college of superiors, is a question of detail to be determined by history.

CHAPTER X.—THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY.

So far, we have been considering the ordinary superiors, who stood out prominently in the local churches, when they settled down as Christian communities. The first spread of Christianity, however, was attended by extraordinary conditions, of which we must take account. In the first place, when the infant Church realised the full meaning of the great commission she had received—the task of leavening humanity—her first attention was given to the missionary equipment required for the fulfilment of this stupendous work. Secondly, the earliest local superiors received no special theological training. They were selected from the first-fruits of an apostle's preaching; and were frequently mere neophytes converted only a few months previously. The difficulty of learning and expounding the Christian doctrine in a young community can well be imagined; that it was a pressing question is evident from the exhortations of St. Paul. In these circumstances, the Holy Spirit vouchsafed special gifts, either to the superiors themselves, or to certain members of the community. Hence the charismata of the word, which occupy so important a place in some of the Pauline epistles.

The word *χάρισμα* signifies a favour, or free gift; in Christian literature, a *gift from God*. To be a Christian, to be a perpetual virgin, to be strong in the virtues of faith, hope and charity are all charismata. St. Paul most frequently uses the word to signify a *gratia gratis data*, that is, a gift intended for the good of others—notably the public good—rather than for one's own personal advantage. These gifts sometimes follow the ordinary Providence of God; they are sometimes miraculous. The apostle does not dwell on this distinction; he is concerned with the charism, only as a *gratia gratis data*. All Christians are members of one body of Christ; and the gifts bestowed on each member ought to be made conducive to the

welfare of the whole body. This is the theme of SS. Peter and Paul : "So, being many, we are one body of Christ, and members of one another, having different charismata according to the grace which is given us." ¹ And again : "Each one as he has received a charism, ministering to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." ² All have not the same gifts : "God has placed in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, charismata of healing, governments, kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? . . . Have all the gifts of healing? . . . But be zealous for the higher charismata." ³

It will be noticed, that the ministry of the word holds the place of honour in St. Paul's catalogue of charismata ; the apostles, prophets and teachers are introduced with the ordinal adverbs *first, secondly, thirdly*. This is only what might be expected. The dissemination of Christian truth was at all times considered a work of the highest importance. It was for this end that the apostles were appointed : "Going, therefore, teach all nations." That they might be able to give all their attention to this great work, they appointed deacons at Jerusalem to attend to less important duties. The Hebrews are called on to remember "those who spoke the word" to them. ⁴ Barnabas is sent to Antioch, to complete the work of evangelization begun by the Cyprian and Cyrenean brethren.

St. Paul insists on the necessity of a mission, for all those who would preach the word : "How shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" ⁵ Jesus Himself is represented in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* as having received a special mission : "A man takes not this honour to himself, but he who is called by God as Aaron was. So also, Christ did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest, but He who said to Him : Thou art my beloved Son." ⁶ These words are confirmed by the gospels : "As the Father hath sent me, so I also send you." ⁷ Christ is sent by the Father, the apostles by Christ, the pastors by the apostles.

¹ Rom. xvi. 6.

² 1 Peter iv. 10.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 7.

⁵ Rom. x. 15.

⁶ Heb. v. 4.

⁷ John xx. 21.

All the examples we have quoted in the chapter on succession will serve as illustrations of this missionary dependence. The Christian preacher is—to use the words of St. Paul—an ambassador of Christ, entrusted with the word of reconciliation.

Besides those who speak the word in virtue of what we may call an ordinary mission, we find in the early communities an order of preachers, who speak under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul, looking rather at the charism of the word, than at the manner of its giving, sets down side by side the ordinary and the extraordinary preacher. We can nevertheless trace in his letters a distinction between the charism of the pastors on the one side, and that of the prophetic ministry on the other. This distinction, it must be remembered, concerns only the kinds of ministry, not the persons who ministered ; for, as the apostle frequently enjoyed the inspiration of a prophet, so the prophet must have been frequently appointed to the ordinary ecclesiastical offices. As we have already dealt at sufficient length with the apostolate and the pastoral charge, we shall here confine our attention to the remaining charismata of the word.

Prophecy has the first claim on our attention, for it is the greatest of these charismata. St. Paul always places the prophets immediately after the apostles, in his enumerations “Desire earnestly spiritual gifts,” he says, “but rather that you may prophesy.”¹ And again : “You are fellow-citizens of the saints, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”² The nature of prophecy can best be gathered from the chapter, which St. Paul devotes to it in his first epistle to the Corinthians : “He that prophesies speaks to men edification and exhortation and consolation. He that speaks in a tongue edifies himself ; but he that prophesies edifies the church. . . . Greater is he that prophesies, than he who speaks with tongues. . . . If I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching ? If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruit-

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

² Eph. ii. 20.

ful. What is it then? I will pray with my spirit, and I will pray with my understanding also. . . . I thank God that I speak with tongues more than you all; but I had rather speak five words in the church with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. . . . If, therefore, the whole church come together, and all speak with tongues, and if unbelievers come in, will they not say you are mad? But if all prophesy, and if an unbeliever comes in, he is reprov'd by all, he is judg'd by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed. . . . If a revelation is made to one sitting, let the first be silent, for ye can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. . . . If any man think himself a prophet or spiritual, let him know the things that I write to you, that they are the commandment of the Lord." ¹

The prophet retains his self-control; so that he can speak or be silent, as he pleases. When he speaks, however, he speaks under inspiration. His message, which is conveyed in sober, intelligible language, consists of an exhortation or instruction calculated to edify and console the faithful. It frequently embodies a revelation, communicated through the prophet to the whole community, "that all may learn, and that all may be exhorted." When occasion demands, the more mysterious elements of prophecy are called forth, and the secrets of men's hearts are laid bare before the congregation. With this insight into the secret things of the present, we must reckon the vision of the future, which was also frequently accorded to the prophets. The famine under Claudius was foretold by Agabus ²; St. Paul was warned by the Spirit, speaking through the prophets in every city, that chains and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. ³ The prophets appear to differ from the ordinary faithful only in this, that they are habitually or occasionally inspired. Any man may thus become a prophet for the time being. It is the wish and

¹ 1 Cor. xiv.² Acts xi. 28.³ Acts xx. 23. xxi. 11.

ideal of St. Paul that *all* should be such : " Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that you should prophesy. . . . But if all prophesy, and if an unbeliever comes in, he is reprov'd by all. . . . Wherefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues ; but let all things be done decently and in order."

It is generally assumed, by writers on this subject, that the prophets as such constituted an order of itinerant missionaries. The New Testament does not seem to warrant this assumption. St. Paul, indeed, takes it for granted, that certain individuals belong permanently to the prophetic order, by reason of the fact that their inspiration is habitual ; but there is no evidence that he contemplates the exercise of their gift, in any but their own community. On the contrary, the first epistle to the Corinthians seems to point decisively to a localised charism. St. Paul pictures to himself a whole community of prophets : " If, therefore, the whole church be assembled together . . . and if all prophesy." If the community is a purely local entity, the tendency to itinerate cannot be characteristic of the units which compose it. The apostle not only gives no hint throughout a long discourse, that the prophets in question were any other than members of the Corinthian church, but in a preceding chapter he omits the general ministry of the apostles, and sets down prophecy among the gifts which appear to be entirely localised. Addressing the particular church of Corinth, he says : " Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. You know that when you were Gentiles, you were led away unto those dumb idols. . . . Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . To one is given the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge ; to another faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, or interpretation of tongues." ¹ Here prophecy is mentioned in the midst of gifts, which appear to have no connection with any unlocalised ministry.

The evidence for an itinerant prophetic order comes chiefly from the *Didache* ; it represents, therefore, at most a condition

¹ 1 Cor. xii.

of the sub-apostolic age. We are here dealing with prophecy, as it was known in the time of St. Paul. Let us see what evidence can be adduced from the New Testament, in favour of the view we are considering. We are told in the *Acts* that certain prophets went down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and there foretold the coming of a famine. It is by no means clear, however, that this journey was undertaken spontaneously. The missions of Barnabas, of the prophets Judas and Silas, and of "the brethren from James," to the same church, make it highly probable that Agabus and his companions were also sent down to Antioch on some specific business.¹ The return of Agabus and Judas to Jerusalem,² and the permanent residence of Barnabas and Silas at Antioch show that there can be no question of an itinerant mission, such as that described in the *Didache*. The prophets and teachers who are mentioned with Barnabas at Antioch likewise seem to be a settled body.³ Five persons are mentioned altogether. Of these, Paul and Barnabas had been there for several years; Lucius the Cyrenean is probably one of the Cyrenean brethren, who first carried the Gospel to Antioch; of the others we know nothing but their names. Some years later, we find Agabus "coming down from Judea," and warning St. Paul at Caesarea that imprisonment awaits him at Jerusalem. We have no evidence to determine what was the motive of the journey of Agabus on this occasion. From the sequence of events in St. Luke's narrative, it appears very probable that the prophet came, to warn St. Paul of the tribulations which awaited him at Jerusalem. Whatever the reason of his visit, Agabus does not appear to have been making a tour from church to church, like the prophets described in the *Didache*. This is clear from the fact that he came directly from Judea to Caesarea, from his own community to that in which he met St. Paul. These are the only passages, so far as I am aware, that can be quoted to prove the existence of an itinerant prophetic order in apostolic times. It will be seen at once that they are of no great consequence. The zeal or charity of a prophet may have led

¹ Acts xi. 22; xv. 22. Gal. ii. 12.

² Acts xv. 33. 34. xxi. 10.

³ Acts xiii. 1.

him occasionally to visit a neighbouring church; or he may have been sent thither on specific business by his own community. It may be concluded, however, from the ensemble of the evidence, that the prophetic order of apostolic times exercised a localised, not an itinerant, ministry.

According to a theory widely accepted in Protestant circles, the magisterial authority of the local clergy arose from the fact that they grabbed the ministry of the prophets. The ministry of the word, we are told, was entirely charismatic in the beginning—that is, dependent on extraordinary gifts. Towards the end of the second century, the prophetic ministry finally went down in the struggle with episcopacy, leaving the bishops in undisputed possession of the official magisterium of the Church. In the *Didache*, we find ourselves in the transition period: “For they (overseers and deacons) also exercise for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers.”¹ Harnack’s commentary on these words is interesting: “They show that speaking the word is not one of their functions, but that this ministration (*owing to lack of prophets and teachers*) is beginning to pass into their hands. Finally, they show that in the abstract a great gulf exists between the prophets and teachers on the one hand, and bishops and deacons on the other, but that we should beware of underestimating the latter (as elected officials), since they now do the work of the former, namely, the ministration of the word.”²

It is unnecessary to repeat the arguments set forth in another chapter to show that the “bishops” exercised the ministry of the word even in the time of St. Paul. Our conclusion is confirmed by what we know of the *teachers*.³ In view of the “great gulf,” which exists between the prophetic and the pastoral ministries, it is difficult to imagine how the view we are criticising ever came to be formulated. There is no evidence, either in apostolic or sub-apostolic literature, to show that the prophet, as such, ever enjoyed any jurisdiction. He was merely the mouthpiece of the Spirit; he spoke with the authority, not of jurisdiction, but of inspired knowledge; his

¹ Did. xv.

² *Constitution and Law*, p. 80. The italics are ours.

³ See below.

word might be compared to that of Scripture. This is particularly clear from the fact that, though women sometimes prophesied, they were never allowed to become "bishops" or overseers. St. Paul, therefore, always speaks of the prophetic ministry as a *means of edification*, never as a pastorate of the flock. The prophet claims a hearing, only in so far as he is inspired to speak; and St. Paul lays down certain tests for the discovery of fraudulent pretensions on this score.¹ Now, if the speaking of the word was at first based entirely on extraordinary charismata, the bishops could make no progress in their supposed invasion of the rights of the prophets, till they had established their own claim to inspiration. History shows no trace of any such claim. The presbyter-bishops were appointed by the Holy Ghost, to shepherd—and the word includes teaching²—the church of God; but they never claimed a hearing on the basis of immediate inspiration. They taught what they themselves had learned in the ordinary way from the apostles and their delegates. They taught with authority or magisterial jurisdiction, because they had received an authoritative mission. The prophetic and pastoral ministries were *different in kind*. The former was based on an extraordinary charism; the latter on the regular devolution of ecclesiastical authority. The prophet, as such, never claimed ecclesiastical mission; the pastor, as such, never claimed immediate inspiration. In view of these facts, I do not see how it can be maintained that the magisterial authority of the bishops is the lineal descendant of the prophetic ministry. Some writers seem to imagine that the more importance they attribute to prophecy in the primitive Church, the more thoroughly they dispose of the idea of a pastorate with magisterial jurisdiction. They forget that the prophets were never allowed to become despotic; and that the greater the influence attributed to them, the greater and more manifest must also be the authority, which ruled, and finally—according to our opponents—supplanted them.

The prophets of the *Didache* are no longer a localised body; but otherwise their ministry is the same as it was in

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 29. 37. Rom. xii. 6.

² Acts xx. 28-30.

the time of St. Paul. Even in the *Didache*, however, the tendency to itinerate is limited. The prophet preaches, not to the heathen, but to the Christian communities ; and he is allowed to settle in one of these, if he pleases. Wherever his inspiration is recognised, he wields great influence. The faithful are directed to receive him as the Lord. If he passes on to another church, they are exhorted to help him on his way, to the best of their ability. If he chooses to settle among them, he has a claim to the first-fruits of "money and raiment and every possession." The community, however, has to judge whether he is a true or false prophet, whether he is a really inspired man or merely an impostor. He is a false prophet, if he remains with them more than two days ; if he asks money or worldly goods ; if he does not practise the virtues which he preaches ; if he contradicts the teaching handed down by tradition. When it is ascertained that the prophet really speaks in the Spirit, he may not be farther tested. To judge him would then be an unpardonable sin. When he is approved, his ministry consists in speaking in the Spirit, whether by word or by symbol. He may, therefore, order a table in the Spirit ; but if he eats of it, he is a false prophet. He is likewise privileged to pray in the Spirit after Communion, without using the ordinary formula of prayer prescribed for the faithful. He is worthy of the highest respect at all times ; if he settles down, he becomes the most honoured man in the community.

Even if we take the *Didache* as a representative document, it scarcely warrants the inferences drawn from it by rationalistic writers. It contains nothing stronger, in reference to the prophets, than the words of St. Paul : "Ye are fellow-citizens of the saints, and servants of God, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets."¹ As in the epistles of St. Paul, so in the *Didache*, the inspiration enjoyed by the prophets is amply sufficient to justify the honour given them. If an inspired man appeared in the Church at the present day, and if his inspiration was universally acknowledged, in what esteem he would be held ! He would not, of course, be allowed to rule the Church in virtue of his charism ; but the

¹ Eph. ii. 20.

same may be said of the prophets. Not even in the *Didache* is there the slightest hint that the prophet exercises any jurisdiction. He is merely a preacher ; and his word has no other authority than that of inspiration. The faithful may reject it, if they please ; their sin will be great, but the prophet has no means of enforcing his exhortations. The local superiors base their claim to a hearing on a different consideration. They are appointed to office, like the pastors of the Pauline churches ; they hold, like them, ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It is not for lack of prophets, as Harnack thinks, that the ministry of the word falls to the presbyter-bishops. The antithesis, as we have already pointed out, lies between the general ministry of the prophets, and the localised ministry of the pastors. The qualities required in candidates for office show that the presbyter-bishops are teachers of the word, independently of the presence or absence of the prophets. The ministry of the word is characteristic of the prophets for two reasons. First, it is their only function, whereas the pastors have many other duties. Secondly, they are the teachers *par excellence*, in as much as their teaching is inspired, and consequently infallible.

There is also reason to believe that the ecclesiastical conditions depicted in the *Didache* do not represent the contemporary condition of the Church at large. The *Didache* comes from the backwoods of Christendom ; it speaks, most probably, for the outlying Judæo-Christian communities of Syria or Palestine, which, even at the end of the first century, were out of touch to a great extent with the main current of Christian tradition. The epistles of Clement, Polycarp and Ignatius, know nothing of these itinerant prophets, who figure so largely in the *Didache*. The writers of the second century speak occasionally of the prophetic charism ; but, when they mention prophets as an order, they mean the prophets of the Old Testament, not those of the New.

Professor Harnack, indeed, argues with great ingenuity, to prove that the Christian prophetic order was still active when Hermas wrote. He is handicapped, however, by the fact that Hermas says nothing of the prophets, in his enumeration of the grades of the Christian ministry. This fact he explains by saying : " Hermas passed over the prophets, because he

reckoned himself one of them." We shall return to Hermas presently. It is sufficient to point out here that Harnack himself felt the weakness of his explanation, as is evident from his comment on the following quotation from Lietzmann :— "Apostles and teachers belong to the past generation, for Hermas ; he recognises also a prophetic office, but only in the Old Testament. He does occupy himself largely with the activities of the true prophet, and feels he is one himself ; but he conceives this *προφητεύειν* as a private activity, which God's equipment renders possible, but which lacks any official character." Harnack remarks :¹ "Perhaps this is the right explanation of the difficulty." We may add that, even if we allowed Harnack to supply the word "prophets" in the enumeration, "apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons," it would not at all follow, that the prophets were still a ministering order in the time of Hermas. There is no evidence that the apostles and prophets in question were contemporary with the writer. On the contrary, it is almost certain that the apostles spoken of are the twelve : "Those twelve mountains are the twelve tribes, which inhabit the whole world. The Son of God was preached, therefore, to these by the apostles."² In any case, Hermas is a romancer—witness his use of the name of Clement. The abstruse dreams of a mystic, who gives little attention to considerations of time or place, cannot reasonably be set up as a standard by which to judge the sober works of trusted leaders like Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp and Justin.

The ministry of the prophets, therefore, must have fallen into disuse throughout the greater part of the Church, before the end of the first century. This was only what might be expected. Prophecy was useful only while it was necessary ; it was necessary only in very young communities. When the apostle was obliged to leave a newly-founded church to its own resources, in order to visit other fields of labour, and when the recently converted presbyters could as yet teach only the elementary truths of Christianity, some such provision as the prophetic charism was required to complete the religious educa-

¹ *Mission* vol. i. P. 340 (Eng. trans.).

² *Sim.* ix. 17.

tion of the faithful. But this system could not last long. Apart from the abuses to which it was liable—and the danger of false prophets was always serious—friction was bound to arise ultimately between the prophets and the local superiors. Even in the newly converted church of Corinth, prophecy, while it produced excellent fruits of edification, nevertheless seriously threatened the good order of the community. St. Paul felt himself called on to limit its activity, and make regulations for its exercise, that all might be done “decently and in order.” These difficulties, though present, were less obvious in the beginning. The zeal and sincerity of all parties left little room for dissension. When the first fervour of conversion cooled, and the Church settled down to a more prosaic manner of life; when, moreover, the faithful were well grounded in Christian doctrine, and provided with a hierarchy of competent official teachers; the prophetic ministry became unnecessary, perhaps even hurtful, to the religious life of the Church, and was gradually withdrawn by the same Providence by which it had been granted. The disappearance of the prophets, so far from introducing an abnormal condition into the life of the Church, was rather a step towards the removal of exceptional ministrations, and the consolidation of a regular system of ecclesiastical government.

The tendency to itinerate, which characterises the prophetic ministry of the *Didache*, is probably to be explained by the fact that prophets were now becoming scarce, even in the semi-isolated Judæo-Christian churches. If this conjecture is correct, it explains the discrepancy between the ecclesiastical conditions described in the *Didache*, and those implied in the epistles of Ignatius. The organization of the great apostolic churches of Asia Minor naturally became stereotyped at an earlier date than that of the less highly educated communities on the confines of Syria or Palestine. The farther the latter were removed from the main stream of Christian thought, the farther also they were behind the organization of the Church at large; the longer they required what St. Paul calls the “milk” of teaching; and the more tenaciously they clung to the prophetic ministry. As the Holy Spirit gradually withdrew

the prophetic charism, the esteem in which the faithful held the few remaining prophets increased in proportion. As the number dwindled, and each church ceased to have its own prophets, the itinerant ministry was the natural development. It is on some such lines as these, I think, that we must seek the explanation of the unique picture presented by the *Didache*.

We shall now consider briefly the third grade of the ministry of the word. "God has set in the church," says St. Paul, "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers."¹ The existence of a charism of teaching can be proved from the New Testament: "We, though many, are one body in Christ . . . having different gifts . . . whether he who teaches in teaching."² This does not mean, however, that the teacher is inspired; for St. Paul speaks of ordinary talents as charismata, whenever they are used for the good of the community. In the chapter which we have just quoted he mentions the charismata of fraternal charity, hatred of evil, love of good, and a number of other well-known Christian virtues. It is among such gifts that we must place the charism of teaching; it seems to be a natural, not a miraculous, talent. St. Paul never implies that the teacher speaks in the Spirit; this is peculiar to the prophet. The teacher conveys to the community, not a revelation ἀποκάλυψις, nor yet an interpretation of the revelations of others.³ His activity is described as διδασκαλία; the content of his discourse as διδαχή. The nature and extent of this διδαχή can be gathered from the epistles of St. Paul. Writing to the Romans, he says: "Thanks to God, because whereas you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart unto that form of doctrine to which you were delivered";⁴ and again: "Mark those who cause divisions and scandals contrary to the teaching, which you have learned." To the Thessalonians he writes: "Wherefore, brethren, hold fast to the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by epistle of ours."⁵ The teaching in question is the tradition handed down by the apostles, the "deposit" mentioned in the pastoral epistles. Hence St. Paul charges

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 28.

² Rom. xii. 7. cfr. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

⁴ Rom. vi. 17.

⁵ 2 Thes. ii. 15.

Timothy: "The things, which thou hast heard from me through many witnesses, the same hand down to faithful men, who shall be capable of teaching others also."¹ The "teacher" of the New Testament appears to hold a position similar to that of a catechist in a modern Catholic mission-field. His charism consists in an aptitude to teach and explain the deposit of faith handed down by the apostles.

The same conception of the office is found in the *Didache*. The very title of the book shows that there was already a defined body of doctrine, which constituted the object of Christian faith, and which admitted of no opposition. It was the teacher's duty to expound this deposit: "Whoever shall come to you and teach the aforesaid, receive him; but if the teacher himself be perverted and teach another διδαχή, to the destruction thereof, receive him not."² From the words which follow—"But concerning apostles and prophets"—the writer seems to have in view in this passage the particular order of "teachers." This is, moreover, the only reference made to the duty of teachers; so that, if the writer does not describe here the nature of the charism, he entirely omits to deal with it.

Although prophets and teachers are closely connected in the *Didache*, the latter are never said to possess the prophetic inspiration, to which the writer attributes so much importance. The two orders exercise distinct ministries: "Every true prophet who settles among you is worthy of his food. Likewise every true teacher is worthy, like the labourer, of his food." The order of enumeration and the amount of space devoted to prophets and teachers respectively, prove that prophecy is a much more highly prized charism than teaching. The prophet speaks in the Spirit; the teacher does not. Here, again, the evidence shows that the teacher does the work of a catechist.

This charism appears to have been exercised by few, if any, in apostolic times, except the pastors of the community. In the epistle to the Ephesians we read: "He has given some to be apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors and teachers"—where the enumeration of pastors and teachers

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

² Did. xi.

under the same τοὺς δέ shows that the two words represent one and the same class of ministers.¹ Similarly, in the first epistle to Timothy, those who labour zealously in teaching are members of the presbyteral college.² In the same epistle, a presbyter-bishop is required to be διδακτικός (apt at teaching), that is, he must have the natural talent or charism of a teacher. According to the epistle to Titus, he must be a man who holds "the faithful word according to the teaching"; for it is his duty to exhort in sound doctrine. This identity of pastors and teachers explains a remarkable passage in the *Acts*.³ The writer introduces the history of the call of Paul and Barnabas with the words: "There were in the church of Antioch certain prophets and teachers." Why should he relate this fact? In view of what we know of prophecy, it is clear that the prophets are mentioned because they were the immediate recipients of the command of the Holy Ghost; it was through them that the Spirit said: "Separate me Paul and Barnabas." The teachers, on the other hand, did not speak in the Spirit they are introduced for a different reason. The context shows that this reason can be no other than the imposition of hands. As the prophets conveyed the message of the Holy Ghost, so the teachers put it in execution. Now, there is no evidence that an extraordinary charism ever gave a man power to impose hands. All our data go to show that this function could only be exercised by one who had been himself ordained by the same ceremony.⁴ Besides the apostles and their delegates, the pastors or presbyter-bishops are the only ministers to whom its exercise is attributed in the New Testament. The inference is clear; the teachers of the *Acts*, no less than those of the epistle to the Ephesians, hold the same office as the pastors.

To St. Paul's mind, the charism of teaching differed, no doubt, from that of ruling; but the two offices were combined in the same individuals. In apostolic times, therefore, the words "teachers" and "pastors" were synonymous, if not in

¹ Eph. iv. 11.

² 1 Tim. v. 17.

³ xiii. 1. seq.

⁴ With the possible exception of the apostles ordained by Christ Himself.

theory, at least in practice. The *Didache* again differs to some extent from the earlier literature. It is only to *some extent*; for while it speaks of an order of itinerant catechists, it likewise represents the pastors as teachers in their own church. The *Shepherd of Hermas* also supplies some interesting data on this question. It is quoted by Harnack, as we have seen, to prove the existence of extraordinary ministries of the word towards the middle of the second century. Harnack's theory, however, appears to be incompatible with the catalogue of offices furnished by Hermas himself. The enumeration—apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons¹—is exactly what we might expect from Ignatius, except that the word “presbyters” is replaced by “teachers.” The apostles are the twelve, the prophets are not mentioned, the teachers as a body are evidently identical with the presbyters.

In this connection it may not be out of place to say a word on some current conceptions of the Corinthian ministry. Rationalistic scholars pretend to find in the epistles to the Corinthians the most complete vindication of their theories. If pastors existed in other churches, they would have existed at Corinth also; if they existed at Corinth, they would have been mentioned by St. Paul. Such is the argument. The church of Corinth, we are told, and consequently the other Pauline communities, knew no pastoral ministry; they were taught and ruled by extraordinary gifts. It never seems to occur to these writers, to test their interpretation of a particular document by the teaching of the apostolic literature as a whole. Even though the epistles to the Corinthians made no mention of the pastors of the church—and we have already referred to Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus—the omission would not materially affect our position: the evidence from other sources is sufficiently strong and varied for the purposes of our argument. It would be surprising, however, if the apostle omitted all reference to the pastors in a passage, where he mentions so many other grades of ministry. The obvious explanation is that St. Paul uses the word “teachers” in the epistle to the Corinthians, in the same sense, in which he uses it in the

¹ Vis. iii. 5.

epistle to the Ephesians : he means the pastors of the community.

Evangelists are not enumerated in the Corinthian list ; they hold a place between the apostles and the pastors in the Ephesian list. The title applied to them seems to imply that their chief duty was the propagation of the Gospel. What we know of Timothy and Philip—the only evangelists mentioned in the New Testament—confirms this inference. The former was the constant companion of St. Paul on his apostolic journeys ; the latter converted the Samaritans. The mission or charism required for this ministry was provided in each case by imposition of hands. The testimony of Eusebius likewise goes to show that the evangelists were ordinary, not extraordinary, preachers. He describes their propagandist activity, and speaks of them as the first successors of the apostles.¹ The evangelists may be compared with the pastors, inasmuch as their ministry was based on the regular devolution of ecclesiastical authority ; with the apostles, inasmuch as their activity was chiefly unlocalised.

It is unnecessary to enter farther into the consideration of particular charismata. Enough has been said in the examination of the chief gifts mentioned by St. Paul, to show that the enjoyment of special talents, whether natural or miraculous, implied in itself no jurisdiction. Prophecy was by far the most important, and the most highly prized, of these gifts. If the prophets were not allowed to rule the Church, the minor gifts could imply no such right. The false notions, so prevalent at the present day in this respect, are based, to a large extent, on a misunderstanding of the word *χάρισμα*. Writers rush to the conclusion that every gift is miraculous, and that consequently all legitimate Christian ministration is based on a miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit. They take no account of the fact that the apostles established a regular system of ecclesiastical government and ministry ; that the ministry so established was a charism ; and that such charism could be transmitted to succeeding generations.²

¹ Euseb. iii. 37.

² 2 Tim. i. 6.

We hear much, at the present day, of the primitive "charismatic anarchy." Rationalistic writers have filled our libraries with accounts of how the government and ministry of the Church were actually evolved, out of—one knows not what—extraordinary charismata. The irony of the situation lies in the fact that most of these men would scoff at a really miraculous gift. The Christian ministry is thus reduced to a primitive outpouring of the Spirit; but this outpouring is itself nothing more than the expression of the enthusiasm and excitement which possessed the earliest Christian converts. These views might have some versimilitude, if we had nothing to guide us but a few isolated passages in the first epistle to the Corinthians. Thanks to the preservation of so many early documents, we have abundant evidence to show that primitive Christianity was not merely a system of extraordinary ways; that the miraculous charismata were but a portion—and an exceptional portion—of the Church's equipment; and that, even where they existed, they were themselves kept in bounds by the authority of the apostles and their successors. These propositions, though not explicitly stated, have nevertheless been made good, I hope, in the preceding chapters.

APPENDIX A.

THE *PAROUSIA* DISCOURSE.

WE have assumed, in the first chapter of this essay, that Christ did not expect an immediate consummation of the world. How, then, are we to explain the discourse on the *parousia*, recorded by the three synoptic evangelists? We have already seen that our Lord promised a coming of His kingdom in power, a promise that was fulfilled, partially when He sent the Holy Ghost, but chiefly when He removed the great rival of Christianity, the temple of Jerusalem. We have also seen that He promised to come again to judge mankind, when the earthly stage of the kingdom shall have run its course. Our Lord seems to make these two comings synchronise; for, having spoken of each separately, He sums up in a single sentence: "Amen I say to you: this generation shall not pass away till all these things are accomplished."¹ The discourse in question is recorded by the three synoptic evangelists.²

We shall begin with St. Luke, because he is the most trustworthy in the matter of chronology: "And some saying of the temple that it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said: 'As to those things which you see, the days will come when there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.' And they asked Him: 'When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when they are about to come to pass?'" Here two questions are proposed—When shall the temple be destroyed? What sign shall precede this catastrophe? In the first part of the discourse, v. 8-24, St. Luke speaks only of the fall of Jerusalem, and of the signs that will precede it. There is no question of the final coming. In Mark the same questions are proposed, but only four of the apostles are present. The only other appreciable difference in Mark's narrative is that contained in v. 10: "And unto all nations the Gospel must first be preached." In view of the context, we might have expected: "*For* unto all nations the Gospel must be preached." But, as it stands, this verse does not hang well with the context. Why should the Gospel be *first* preached? What is the other term of comparison? There is none, so far, except the fall of Jerusalem; and verses 19-20 forbid us to take this as synchronous with the final world-catastrophe. It is worthy of note that St. Luke omits this statement. St. Matthew records it in the same context, but for a special reason, as we shall see presently. St. Mark is probably

¹ Matt. xxiv. 34.² Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.

following St. Matthew, or an earlier document, in taking it out of another discourse, and setting it down here on account of its affinity with the idea of universal testimony in the preceding verse.

St. Matthew differs considerably from SS. Mark and Luke at the very outset. Instead of the two questions—When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when they are about to come to pass?—we have in Matthew three questions: “When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation¹ of the world? From the words of Christ eliciting the questions, and from the agreement of Mark and Luke both with these words and with one another, we think Matthew is here grouping two sets of questions; one relating to the fall of Jerusalem, *i.e.* to the coming of Christ in power, as we have already explained; the other referring to His coming at the general judgment. Such a treatment of his subject is quite in accordance with Matthew's style. The combination was, moreover, quite natural in a gospel written by a Jew for Jews. Even for a Christian Jew, the destruction of the temple must have been a striking figure of the consummation of the world; for a Jew who believed only in the law and the prophets, the destruction of the temple must have implied the end of the world.²

Matthew agrees with Mark in recording the verses about perseverance to the end, and the mission to the Gentiles; but he makes a different connection: “And many false prophets will arise and seduce many, and because iniquity hath abounded the charity of many will grow cold; but he that shall persevere to the end shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come.”³ This passage forms a logical sequence; for, though the last sentence seems to stand alone, it is naturally suggested by the words, “he that shall persevere to the end.” We have seen that the parallel verse in Mark fits badly with the context. The same reasons are good here. We have, however, an additional reason for thinking that Matthew is grouping. In verses 5-10 Matthew agrees with Luke in recording certain events that will precede the fall of Jerusalem. Verse 11 is practically a repetition of verse 5; but it introduces the signs of a final catastrophe. Is it too much to suppose that verse 11 and following are taken from a discourse dealing with the third question posed by Matthew? This seems to be the only explanation, which will account for the mention of a *previous* universal evangelisation in the midst of signs leading up to an event which will have an indefinite future.⁴

St. Luke passes on to a new subject in the next few verses.⁵ (The tran-

¹ The last two are distinct questions, as the use of $\tau\eta\varsigma$ before $\sigmaυ\pi\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ shows.

² In many of the prophecies Zion remains the centre of the Messianic Kingdom.

³ Matt. xxiv. 11-14.

⁴ Cfr. Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

⁵ xxi. 25-28.

sition is sharper in Mark.) We are here face to face with the signs of the last judgment. The events are more terrible; the Son of Man brings the retinue with which He will come in judgment, as we know from other passages; there will be no possibility of flight, for the angels will be sent to the uttermost bounds of the earth; indeed there is no motive for flight (at least for the elect), for His coming is not a tribulation, but rather an event to be welcomed: "Look up and lift your heads, for your redemption is at hand."¹ Matthew seems to say that this coming of Christ will immediately follow the destruction of Jerusalem.² But what of the indefinite future implied in verses 21 and 22? And what of the various passages, in which we have seen that the kingdom is to have a long life on earth? Here we have another proof that Matthew is grouping; for, not only is the connection here made irreconcilable with other parts of St. Matthew's gospel, but it is irreconcilable with what has immediately gone before. What is the meaning of saying that "such tribulation hath not been, neither shall be"; and that "unless these days were shortened no flesh should be saved; but for the elect they shall be shortened"—what is the meaning of all this, if there is to be no future, no "shall be," but an immediate judgment? Why should the elect desire to save their flesh, if their redemption is at hand immediately? This connection, at least, does not belong to one original discourse, therefore. It is omitted by Mark and Luke; it is in opposition to what has gone before in all three evangelists; it is introduced here by St. Matthew from a discourse, in which Christ deals with our evangelist's third question. In fact, it seems almost certain that these three or four verses³ are out of place here, even though recorded by Mark and Luke. They have nothing to do with the questions of the apostles (as proposed by Mark and Luke), nor with the words of Christ which elicited them; they are so placed, that if we take the connection made by Matthew as original, or if we take "generation" a few verses later in its ordinary sense, they cut short the future life of the Church, which is announced elsewhere (even in this very discourse) by all three evangelists.

St. Luke, however, is a historian, and it is not his style to make such combinations. But perhaps even he may admit of an exception. We think there are reasons in his own record for saying he has done so. St. Luke clearly distinguishes two events—a visitation of Jerusalem,⁴ and a visitation of the world.⁵ The former is (1) a thing of terror, "a day of vengeance that all things may be fulfilled that are written," a time so terrible that even the elect would not be saved, unless the days were shortened. (2) It is a national affair: "There shall be great distress in the land and wrath on *this* people . . . and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by Gentiles." (3) It is a passing calamity, not a final catastrophe: "They shall

¹ Cfr. Rom. viii. 23.

² xxiv. 29.

³ Matt. xxiv. 29-31. Mark xiii. 24-27. Luke xxi. 25-28.

⁴ Luk. xxi. 20-24. 36.

⁵ *ibid.* 25-28.

be led away captives into all nations, until the times of the nations are fulfilled." The second visitation is (1) an event to be welcomed (at least by the just): "Look up, lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand." (2) It is a universal affair: "On the earth distress of nations, men withering away from fear and expectation of the things that are to come upon the *whole world*." (3) It is a final judgment; for (a) "Your redemption is at hand";¹ (b) the coming of the Son of Man in power and majesty on the clouds of heaven (with His angels, as the other evangelists add) is the sign of the last judgment, as we learn from other passages.²

St. Luke immediately records the parable of the fig-tree, without giving us any hint as to which of these two series of signs it is meant to represent. Not only that, but the signs represented by the fig-tree are to usher in an event of which he has not previously spoken at all, namely the kingdom of God.³ One cannot help suspecting that there is some confusion here. This is not St. Luke's usual style. Suspicion becomes a solid probability, when our evangelist goes on to tell us, in the next verse: "Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things are fulfilled"; and three verses later on: "Watch ye and pray that you may be accounted worthy to escape these things that are to come." Here we find ourselves back again, without any warning, to the destruction of Jerusalem. Relating to this event St. Luke has said: "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written." Here we find: "This generation shall not pass till all these things are fulfilled"; and: "Pray to escape all these things that are to come"—the last clause being clearly a reminiscence of the shortening of the terrible days in Matthew and Mark. There is a remarkable similarity here between the construction of verses 32 and 36 on the one hand, and verse 22 on the other. In verse 22, where there is only question of Jerusalem, we are told of "days of vengeance," when "all things that are written will be fulfilled." In verse 32, again, "all things will be fulfilled"; and in verse 36 there is question of "escaping all these things that are to come," days of vengeance, therefore, included. This shows that verses 32 and 36 fit in exactly with the fall of Jerusalem. When, on the other hand, St. Luke had referred to the final judgment, the admonition was not "Pray to escape these things," but rather "Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand." One can scarcely avoid the conclusion, therefore, that there has been, even in Luke's record, a combination of discourses; that the parable of the fig-tree is the natural continuation of the first part of the chapter, and that the verses relative to the last judgment have been transferred from another discourse.

In the parallel passage of Mark, we find an equally strong reason for thinking he is grouping. He first records the words: "Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things are accomplished"; then he adds: "No one knows of that day or hour, neither the angels, nor the

¹ Cfr. Rom. viii. 23.

² Cfr. Matt. xiii. 41, xvi. 27, xxv. 31.

³ Luke xxi. 31.

Son, but only the Father." Here the Son, "who knows not the day nor the hour," reveals that it will come within a single generation.¹ Those two statements can hardly have stood side by side in one original discourse. The evangelist must either have combined two discourses, or omitted important transitions by the Master. For reasons already discussed, we think the combination theory is much the more probable. Matthew groups both questions and answers. Mark and Luke group only the answers.

One may wonder what foundation could exist for grouping instructions on subjects so diverse as the fall of Jerusalem and the last judgment. Nevertheless, the affinity is closer than one might at first suppose. The first part of the discourse, as we followed it in St. Luke, records the signs leading up to a great visitation, that is to come upon the Jews—"a day of wrath upon *this* people." But, the evangelist adds from another discourse, there will be a similar day, with its proper signs, for all the nations of the earth: "As a snare it will come upon all that sit upon the face of the *whole earth*."² After this little digression, the evangelist continues the first

¹We know there is some controversy about the word "generation" here; but we see no good reason for taking it in any but its ordinary sense of a generation; so that the word means Christ's (Jewish) contemporaries. This seems to be the meaning of "this generation" in other discourses; compare Matthew xii. 39-45. (Luke xi. 29-32), Mark viii. 38-39., Luke vii. 31-34. (Matt. xi. 16), Luke xi. 51, xvii. 25. It has been suggested that the meaning is here "this race," (the race being Jewish, Christian, or human, according to various opinions). The object of this interpretation is to postpone the date—fixed by comparison with "this generation"—to the end of the world, when, and when alone, the final judgment will come. Christ's announcement then means: "This *race* shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled." This is Christ's answer to the question: "When shall the temple be destroyed?" It does not add much to one's knowledge to be told that it shall be destroyed before the world is destroyed. That was self-evident; otherwise, no one would be left to throw it down. Nor would it be much of a wonder that the temple should fail, before the race itself. Christ's solemn declaration in Matt. xxiv. 2 implies more than this: and the wonder and anxiety of the apostles prove that they understood Him as implying more. When Christ, in answer to the apostles' question, makes the solemn declaration: "Amen I say to you: this generation shall not pass away till etc." He clearly means to convey information; information, moreover, which is calculated to surprise. Again, the words are so like another declaration, "Amen, I say to you that some of those who stand here shall not taste death," that we think the word "generation" must have here the same meaning as it has in the passages referred to above. Let us suppose, on the other hand, that Christ is replying, not to the question, "When shall the temple be destroyed?" but to the question, "When shall the final consummation come?" In this case the words, "This generation shall not pass," mean, according to the interpretation we are criticising, "This *race* shall not pass, till the final judgment comes." This, of course, is a silly answer to put in Christ's mouth; for it is mere tautology. He could not come to judge, unless there was someone left to be judged. The consummation of the world, moreover, is at least virtually the consummation of the race; so that the interpretation, "This race shall not pass, till it sees the consummation of the world," is also tautological.

² Luk. xxi. 35.

sermon, and gives the date of the Jewish visitation : "Amen, I say to you that this generation shall not pass away till all this is accomplished." This, again, suggests the date of the second visitation : "But of this day or hour no one knows, neither the angels, nor the Son, but only the Father."¹ Then we have the moral of the first discourse : "Pray that you may be worthy to escape all this"; with which is combined the moral of the second : "(Pray that ye be worthy) to appear before the Son of Man, when the redemption shall be at hand."² The same combination of two morals can be traced in Matthew verses 37-42 ; 44-51.

From this analysis we see that our Lord foretold in a general way the date of the destruction of Jerusalem ; but that He left quite undetermined the date of the general judgment. The rationalistic critics seem to us to be abandoning true criticism, when, on the strength of this obscure chapter, and in opposition to the whole gist of the rest of the gospels, they put forward the theory, that Christ's teaching was purely apocalyptic. Jesus, they say, cannot have intended to found a church, since he expected and predicted an immediate consummation of the world. Have we not much better reason for reversing the argument and saying : Christ founded a church, and contemplated a future for it ; therefore, he did not expect or predict a hasty consummation of the world ?

Loisy's peculiar view makes no improvement in the ordinary apocalyptic theory. The Church, he tells us, was born out of the expected *parousia*. It happened in this way ; Christ inaugurated a kingdom, which he thought was to be presently glorified and transformed into the final kingdom of heaven. Wishing to extend this kingdom while there was yet time, He sent His disciples to preach the gospel. The society of expectant disciples became the Church. But, if the first Christians were united only by the bond of a common expectation of an immediate *parousia*, will Loisy explain how the Church could outlive the disillusion ? If men believed on the word of Christ that the end of the world was at hand, that in fact it would synchronise with the fall of Jerusalem, how could they continue to follow Him, after the events had proved Him a false prophet ? Would such a man be followed at the present day ? The critics seem to forget that the early Christians were men like ourselves. We have but to consider the state of mind of the two disciples, as they journeyed to Emmaus on the first Easter Sunday, to see what would have become of the Church, if it rested on the basis suggested by Loisy

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Note on the parallel passages, Matthew xvi. 27-28, Mark viii. 38-39, Luke ix. 26-27.

It has been suggested that in these passages the two comings are the same, namely, the final coming in judgment ; for the verses are too closely connected to admit of our disjoining them. Mark and Luke, especially the

¹ Mark xiii. 32.

² Luk. xxi. 36.

former, afford us reasons for thinking this is not so. In the first place, the evangelists seem to be giving us only a summary of Christ's discourse. This appears (1) from the brevity of the record ; (2) from the abrupt transition from thought to thought, notwithstanding the use of the word "for" at the beginning of each verse ; (3) from the omission of certain words by all three—if Christ uttered only five verses altogether, why should Matthew omit verse 38 of Mark ; and Mark and Luke omit 27B of Matthew ? (4) from the different form of the last verse in the different records. The evangelists are not giving a verbatim record, but a summary, in which they omit the signs of transition. Even in this synopsis, however, Mark preserves for us an evidence of transition, omitted by the other two evangelists, between the last two verses. The words, "And he said to them," show that there has been a transition, and that consequently the two verses are not to be taken in close connection.

Secondly, in both Mark and Luke (and to some extent in Matthew), the events predicted in these two verses are different. In the first it is the coming of the Son of man in glory with His angels. In the second it is the kingdom of God.

Thirdly, whatever connection exists, appears to exist between Mark viii. 39, on the one hand, and 38A (not 38B) on the other. The meaning, then, is : "He that shall be ashamed of me in this adulterous and sinful generation will be denied by Me at the final judgment. (The majority of this generation will *de facto* deny Me—Luke xvii.—but in spite of this) the kingdom will come in power, before the last of my audience dies ; hence, before this sinful and rejecting generation shall pass away." Here our Lord seems to imply two things, (a) encouragement for His followers—the kingdom will be soon consolidated, even though many will be "ashamed" of Him ; (b) a threat that, not only at the final judgment, but even much sooner, the rejecting generation will be punished. The latter seems to be in keeping with Luke xvii., where after He has stated that He will be rejected by this generation, He goes on to say that a day will come when He will be revealed ; and that as the contemporaries of Lot and of Noah were punished and destroyed, so it will be when the Son of Man is revealed. This day of revelation is not the final coming ; as is shown (1) by the possibility of flight ; (2) by the fact that not all will be taken ; (3) by its likeness to the day predicted in Luke xxi. 21.

APPENDIX B.

THE ROMAN LIST OF HEGESIPPUS.

THE translation given in the text—"When I came to Rome, I drew up a list as far as Anicetus"—has met with much opposition from modern scholars. The words are: γενόμενος δὲ ἐν Ρώμῃ διαδοχὴν ἐποιησάμην μέχρι Ἀνικητῶν. The objection is twofold: the words διαδοχὴν ἐποιησάμην cannot mean "I drew up a list"; διατριβὴν and not διαδοχὴν is the correct reading.

With regard to the first point, we have only to compare Euseb. v. 5. to see how groundless is the objection: "This writer (Irenaeus) has inserted the (succession) list of the Roman bishops in his third book against the heretics—τῶν ἐπὶ Ῥώμης τὴν διαδοχὴν ἐπισκόπων." In this passage the word has evidently the very meaning we have given it in the quotation from Hegesippus. It is used again (Eus. v. 12.) in connection with the bishops of Jerusalem: "Mark was the first bishop of the Gentiles that presided there. The lists of those there say that after him Cassianus became bishop; after him Publius."¹ Harnack objects to the analogy, because Hegesippus does not add ἐπισκόπων to διαδοχὴν. But what was the necessity of adding it, when he was speaking only of bishops? He also quotes the use of κατάλογος by Irenaeus for a "list." This word is used in the same sentence as διαδοχή: both words mean exactly the same thing: Irenaeus uses the synonym, merely to vary his terms.

With regard to the second point, I cannot do better than quote the words of Dr. Lightfoot²: "I have had no misgiving in retaining the word διαδοχὴν; for (1) It alone has any authority, being read not only by all the Greek mss., but by the very ancient and perhaps coeval Syrian Version. On the other hand διατριβὴν is not found in a single ms. It is a pure conjecture of Saville founded on Rufinus. But, the general looseness of Rufinus deprives his version of any critical weight, and his rendering of this very passage shows that he either misunderstands or despises the Greek—'cum autem venissem Romam, permansi inibi donec Aniceto Soter, et Soteri successit Eleutherius'—where not only this list of succession, but all mention of the diaconate of Eleutherius has likewise disappeared. In the next sentence again he translates ἐν ἐκάστῃ διαδοχῇ 'in omnibus istis ordinationibus', thus showing that he entirely misapprehends the gist of the passage. There is no adequate reason, therefore, for supposing that

¹ μεθ' ὃν ἐπισκοπεῖσαι Κασσιανὸν αἱ τῶν αὐτόθι διαδοχαὶ περιέχουσι.

² *Clement* vol. i. P. 154.

Rufinus read *διατριβήν*. (2) It is quite clear that Eusebius himself did not read *διατριβήν* for he says elsewhere (iv. 11.) that Hegesippus visited Rome in the time of Anicetus, and remained there till the time of Eleutherius. (3) The context requires *διαδοχὴν ἐποιήσασθαι* 'I drew up a list of (the episcopal) succession.' He says that originally his list had ended with the then bishop, Anicetus, and accordingly he now supplements it with the names of the two bishops next in order, Soter and Eleutherius, thus bringing it down to the time when he writes these *Memoirs*. It is therefore with some surprise that I find Harnack adopting *διατριβήν* confidently, and declaring that 'ne levissima quidem dubitatio relicta est.'"

It is scarcely necessary to add anything to this thorough refutation of Harnack's contention. We may remark, however, that *μέχρις Ἀνικητου* is absolutely inexplicable on Harnack's theory. If Hegesippus came to Rome in the reign of Anicetus, as Eusebius testifies, then the only words that could stand with *διατριβήν* are ἐπ' Ἀνικητου, or possibly καθ' Ἀνικητον.

APPENDIX C.

MARK'S ALEXANDRIAN MISSION.

I do not think Mgr. Duchesne is quite correct in saying : " One tradition—reported by Eusebius in the fourth century, and reproduced by him *without corroboration*—says that the Evangelist Mark first preached the gospel in Egypt."¹ Even if we suppose that Malalas did not find the quotation given above, in the writings of Theophilus himself, he very probably got it second hand from Julius Africanus.² I can find no ground for supposing that, while Eusebius copied the names and dates of the first ten bishops from Africanus, as Duchesne thinks he did, he found the tradition about Mark in a totally different source. If Africanus wrote a list of the first Alexandrian bishops, the name of the founder of the line was essential to that list. If he had mentioned any other founder than Mark, Eusebius could not have neglected his testimony. As Africanus wrote about A.D. 221, the tradition is much older than the fourth century. If the quotation from Theophilus is genuine, it brings us back to the end of the second century. The tradition is moreover corroborated by St. Jerome. Nor can it be maintained that Jerome is merely following Eusebius ; for the latter nowhere mentions the curious Alexandrian custom of which Jerome speaks.

Duchesne does not fail to call attention to " the serious objection, that Dionysius of Alexandria refers³ to his (Mark's) history, without betraying the least suspicion, that he had any connection with the Egyptian metropolis." Dionysius might indeed have referred to Mark's Alexandrian mission ; but too much has been made, I think, of the omission. The reference made by Dionysius is so brief, and the mention of Alexandria so irrelevant to his purpose, that no safe conclusion can be drawn from his silence. If we are to draw any inference, it is that he distinguished " John surnamed Mark " from Mark the evangelist ; for it would have been much more natural in the context, to speak of his authorship of the gospel, than of his Alexandrian mission. If Dionysius made this distinction, the argument from his silence collapses ; for it is not " John Mark," but the author of the gospel, that is connected with Alexandria. Dionysius had reasons for making this distinction. The dates handed down by Africanus were so incompatible with the data supplied by the *Acts*, that the companion of Paul and Barnabas could not be easily identified with the apostle of Alexandria. This may perhaps be the true explanation of the chronological difficulties of the Alexandrian list. Eusebius may have confounded the evangelist with an Egyptian missionary of the same name ; or early tradition may have confounded him with John Mark of the *Acts*.

¹ *Early Church History*. vol. i. P. 241 (Eng. trans.) Italics are ours.

² Cfr. Lightfoot ; *Clement* i. P. 48.

³ Apud Euseb. vii. 25.

APPENDIX D.

ST. JEROME'S THEORY OF JURISDICTION.

THE basis of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, according to St. Jerome, is the priesthood common to bishops and presbyters. This is clear from his letter to Evangelus, where he deals with the claims of certain deacons to a super-presbyteral jurisdiction: "For since the apostle clearly teaches that the presbyters and bishops were the same, why should a servant of tables and widows arrogantly set himself above those, at whose prayers *the body and blood of Christ are confectioned*?" Again, he says: "Wherever there is a bishop . . . he is of the *same priesthood* (sacerdotii). The power of riches or the humility of poverty does not make a bishop greater or less; but all are successors of the apostles, in virtue of their priesthood." Again: "Presbyter and bishop are names, one of age, the other of dignity. Hence Titus and Timothy are instructed about the ordination of bishops and deacons; there is no mention of (the ordination of) presbyters, because the presbyter is included in the bishop. A man is promoted from something less to something greater. Let the deacon be ordained, therefore, from the presbyterate (to deaconship), if the presbyter is less than the deacon; but if the presbyter is ordained from deaconship, let him understand that, though less (than the deacon) in temporal goods, he is greater by priesthood (sacerdotio)." St. Jerome's great argument against the deacons is the fact that they have not the priesthood.

The same idea is found in his treatise against the Luciferians¹: "Since the deacon Hilary has fallen away from the Church . . . he can neither consecrate the Eucharist, having no *bishops and presbyters* (episcopus et presbyteros) . . . That, however, is no church, which has not priests (sacerdotes)." Notice that he does not specify bishops and presbyters in the last clause; he uses the common title *priests*. It is the priesthood that makes a church worthy of the name; the priesthood furnishes the basis of organization. Again, in the epistle to Nepotianus, he says: "Let us always remember what the apostle Peter prescribes for *priests* (sacerdotibus): Feed the flock of God, which is among you, exercising the oversight not by constraint but willingly . . . that, when the Prince of pastors comes, you may receive an unfading crown of glory." According to St. Jerome's interpretation of the apostle, the priesthood is the foundation of ordinary jurisdiction.

¹ Chap. xxi.

APPENDIX E.

ORGANIZATION CONTEMPLATED IN ACTS XIV. 22 AND TITUS 1. 5.

THESE passages could mean, as far as the grammatical construction is concerned, that a single elder was set up in each church. There is no evidence, however, of such an arrangement. In churches from which we have any definite information there were certainly several elders. Such, for instance, are the churches of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica. The last mentioned was a newly-founded community, and therefore presumably small in numbers, when St. Paul wrote, yet it had several ecclesiastical superiors. The use of the word *πρεσβυτέριον* likewise shows that the presbyteral college was a recognised institution. St. Peter knows of no other system of organization in the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia; for he speaks of "the flock (singular) that is among you (plural)," when he addresses the elders of those churches. At a later date we find the Ecclesiastical Canons of the Apostles (xvi.-xviii.) prescribing the appointment of a bishop and three presbyters for a community which consists apparently of less than twelve families.

At the present day we can scarcely understand this multiplication of clergy. The explanation is probably to be sought in the fact that in these newly-founded communities the clergy did not live by the Gospel, but earned their bread by secular pursuits like the rest of the faithful. It would have been very difficult, if not impossible, in these circumstances, for one man to bear the whole responsibility of ecclesiastical service and administration; and it would scarcely have been prudent or fair to ask one man to do so. It must also be remembered that the apostles had great confidence in the power of the Gospel to appeal to humanity and make converts to Christianity. When St. Paul set up a local hierarchy, therefore, he not only kept in view the present needs of the community, but also provided for considerable development in the future. In the words of Clement of Rome, the apostles appointed their first-fruits to be "overseers and deacons of those who were (afterwards) to become believers." The passages in question imply therefore the establishment of several elders, a presbyteral college, in every church.

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